

WILMING
REVIEW
ENGLISH
POSITION

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DEATH
PAGE

IN SECTION TWO

REVIEW OF THE HATE
The most violent film that has shocked France

Government lawyer sells off Fred West biography

The Official Solicitor has commissioned a "definitive" biography of Fred West and has provided the author with thousands of pages of police interviews, as well as West's handwritten account of his life.

The author who has been awarded what will undoubtedly prove a literary goldmine is a former *Times* journalist, Geoffrey Wansell, who recently completed a biography of the playwright Terence Rattigan.

The extraordinary and controversial deal was brokered by the literary agency, Scott Ferris Associates on behalf of Peter Harris, the Official Solicitor, after a series of highly confidential discussions.

Mr Harris has promised Mr Wansell exclusive access to West's autobiography, said to be entitled *I Only Ever Loved An Angel*, and 13 volumes of transcripts of police interviews with the Gloucester brawler. The 100-page memoir is believed to have been unfinished when West, who was charged with the murders of 12 women and girls, hanged himself in Winslow Green prison, Birmingham, on New Year's Day.

The book - which seems certain to be one of the best-selling biographies in recent years - will be published by Hodder Headline, "some time next year" after it bid a six-figure sum. The account will earn West's children thousands of pounds in advance payments from Headline, which will be paid as soon as contracts are signed in the next few days.

The Official Solicitor was made administrator of West's estate - including 25 Cromwell Street, the autobiography and the police interviews - because West died intestate with no adult relatives who could become executors. Mr Harris operates on behalf of anyone who dies without a will or relatives who are able to act as executors.

EXCLUSIVE MARIANNE MACDONALD

Under normal intestacy laws, his widow, Rosemary, would be entitled to half the proceeds of his estate. But Mrs West, who is standing trial in Winchester for the murders of 10 women and girls, is understood to have waived her right to these.

Mr Wansell will also be paid a large advance when the contracts are sealed and he and the West children will divide future royalty payments between them. The advance has been

paid to John Linneker, of Taylor Joynson Garrett, the solicitors' firm which acts for the Official Solicitor, said he was unaware of any deal concerning the book which excluded the adult children from the proceeds.

Mr Brooke revealed yesterday that the biography would dwell on "a great deal of detail" which emerged from the police interrogations.

Both the police statements and West's handwritten memoir contained information which would be unknown to the public, particularly with regard to West's activities in Scotland as a young man, he added.

As the effective trustee, Mr Harris is under a duty to West's children to "maximise" the profits from their father's estate. Its prime asset is the so-called West archive including the transcripts of police interviews and the autobiography.

But others are likely to disagree with the Official Solicitor's decision that the West children's financial interest is best served by commissioning an official biography. They argue that a well-told account of West's life, however scholarly, must increase the already-macabre level of interest in his life and affect the future happiness of the children.

Mr Wansell, who lives in Whistler, said yesterday that he hoped to finish his biography about nine months after the end of Rosemary West's trial, which has been attending.

He added: "I think the chance of trying to write a book about West himself is fascinating and I am approaching it with enormous trepidation." He refused to disclose his advance for

earned back in sales.

Alan Brooke, the non-fiction publisher, said he had been offered several or eight biographies of West but had chosen to bid for Mr Wansell's because "it was a completely definitive account".

He said he had been given to understand that earnings from the book would only go to West's five children who are under 18 and that his three adult children - who have all sold their stories to newspapers - would not profit from it.

"The proceeds from the book will be going to, as one might say, West's surviving children -



By his own hand: Fred West committed suicide after writing 100 pages of his autobiography

Red Rum
passes
final
post

GREG WOOD

Red Rum, the most famous racehorse in Britain, was humanely destroyed yesterday morning after being found distressed in his box. Appropriately, the only horse to win the Grand National three times was later buried in the shadow of the winning post at Aintree racecourse.

Red Rum was 30, an exceptional age for a horse. His racing career began in the mid-1960s and included a success in a Flat race in the hands of Lester Piggott. But it was when he passed into the care of Ginger McCain, a Southport car-salesman, that his progress towards stardom began.

McCain exercised Red Rum on the beach behind his showroom. In 1973 he won the National for the first time, beating Crisp in one of the most dramatic finishes seen at Aintree. He won again in 1974, finished second in 1975 and 1976, and completed his hat-trick the following year.

In Red Rum's time, the National course was more demanding than it is today. The public recognised his achievement and Red Rum's popularity endured long after his racing days were over. He was in constant demand to open supermarkets and betting shops. "He's always been brilliant with people," said Phil Harrison, his stable-lad in recent years. "As far as I know, he's never nipped or kicked anyone."

McCain said yesterday: "He was a tremendous old competitor, but much more than that. He'd switched on the Blackpool lights and was chief-tain-of-honour at the Highland Games. He was a very remarkable horse, seriously magical." A memorial will be erected over Red Rum's grave in time for the next Grand National.

National treasure, page 28

Sacked prisons chief to sue Howard

HEATHER MILLS
AND DONALD MACINTYRE

Embattled Michael Howard vowed to clear his name last night in the face of a High Court writ from Derek Lewis, the sacked director of the Prison Service, implicitly accusing the Home Secretary of having misled Parliament.

Mr Howard was last night said by sides to be "relishing" the prospect of meeting his critics head on in today's Commons debate, amid signs that he still has strong support among Tory MPs. As part of a concerted effort by Government strategists to deflect the attacks on Mr Howard, Conservative Central Office issued a series of rebuttals of allegations made by the Labour leader Tony Blair and his Home Affairs spokesman Jack Straw.

But Mr Lewis' writ for unlawful dismissal presents the gravest threat to date to the

Home Secretary's career. It lies in the face of Mr Howard's assertion to the Commons that he played no part in the removal of John Marriott, the Parkhurst prison governor, after the escape of three top-security

prisoners. Not only has Mr Howard always denied interfering in operational matters, the writ claims that to do so breaches the terms under which the Prison Service Agency was set up.

"It is the Home Secretary's cowardly, dishonourable and dissembling response to the Parkhurst escape which may now prove fatal to him" - Leading article, page 20

prisoners. And it contains a damning catalogue of 12 alleged incidents of ministerial interference in Prisons Service operations and business. They include delaying security improvements and changing them, interfering in staff relations and in prison discipline - and a requirement that Mr Lewis meet Mr Howard and others at the Home Office an average of once a day to discuss opera-

tional matters.

Mr Lewis is seeking special damages for loss of £125,000 a year salary under a revised contract which was due to end in September 1996. His conservative stance has clearly ended any lucrative severance package that he might have received had he gone quietly.

Within hours of Mr Lewis' bombshell, the increasingly isolated Home Secretary was dealt another embarrassing blow.

Geoffrey Keays, one of the four non-executive members of the Prisons Board, resigned in protest at Mr Lewis' treatment and a second, Urmila Banerjee, said she was considering resigning.

Although Mr Lewis' actions seriously undermine Mr Howard's claim that he bears no responsibility for the Parkhurst debacle and the crisis in the prison service, last night he said his only concern was to get at the truth. "For me it is matter of getting the record straight, clearing the air, and creating the conditions for the operational independence that the Prisons Service needs," he told the *Independent*.

But his court action has the potential for far greater damage. Under the rules of disclosure, Mr Lewis could obtain access to the thousands of documents considered by the Learmonth inquiry - many of which are believed to point to ministerial



Jailor's dozen: Derek Lewis's writ makes 12 allegations

IN BRIEF

Paris to join nuclear ban France, along with Britain and the United States, is to announce that it intends joining the South Pacific nuclear-free zone, committing itself to closing its nuclear testing facilities in Mururoa, though not before it has completed its current cycle of experiments there. Page 15

Leeson's bosses questioned Singapore investigators moved swiftly yesterday to interview James Bax and Simon Jones, the senior Baring's executives who supervised disgraced trader Nick Leeson. Their action followed allegations of a cover-up of Leeson's share dealing losses which brought down Baring's Bank. Page 22

Graf suffers second defeat Steffi Graf, under pressure from a tax-fraud investigation and a chronic back injury, suffered only her second defeat of the year yesterday when she was knocked out of the Brighton International tournament by Marijana de Swart. Page 22



COMMENT

News analysis: Can we love the car and still respect the environment? Page 19

Another View: David Trimble writes on arms decommissioning and Irish peace talks. Page 20

Hamish McRae: The sting affair has a lesson for us all. Page 21

Andrew Marr takes on his critics over the power of the state. Page 21

John Walsh's Diary reveals, exclusively, a very surprising US presidential candidate. Page 19

Weather: England and Wales will be dry and bright with sunny spells, but north-western areas will cloud over later. Scotland will be wet and windy. Section Two, page 29

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news

Rosemary West trial: Witness tells of 'excruciating pain' during sexual assault by father and stepmother Daughter 'was abused from age of 8'

WILL BENNETT

Anne Marie Davis told a hushed Winchester Crown Court yesterday how her father, Frederick West, and her stepmother, Rosemary West, repeatedly sexually abused her from the age of eight onwards.

Speaking quietly and often crying, she described how on one occasion she had been strapped to a frame and raped by Mr West and how later she was assaulted by the couple after a friendly night out.

She was told they were helping her future sex life, that she was lucky to have such caring parents and that this type of behaviour went on in all families.

Mrs West, 41, denies murdering 10 girls and young women whose remains were found at 25 Cromwell Street.

Gloucester, and at the couple's previous home in the city. Mr West, who was charged with 12 murders, was found dead in his prison cell on New Year's Day.

Mrs Davis, 31, told the court that she was the daughter of Mr West and his first wife, Rena, but she was brought up by Rosemary West.

She said that when she was about eight her father and stepmother took her down into the cellar at 25 Cromwell Street where Mrs West undressed her.

Mrs Davis said: "I was crying, just asking what is going on? What is happening? And I was told I should be very grateful and I was very lucky that I had such caring parents and they were going to help me make sure that when I got married I would be able to satisfy my

husband. I was struggling... so much that I had my hands bound and I was gagged."

"I remember the excruciating pain. I just wanted the hurt to go away. I also felt I should not be so ungrateful because they were doing this to help me."

Brian Leveson QC, for the prosecution, asked what Mrs West's reaction had been. She replied: "She was laughing and snickering and joining in and just saying to me it was for my own good and to stop being silly."

Mrs Davis said: "My dad scratched her chest and warned her not to tell anybody what had happened. She told the jury of eight men and four women that later her father brought home a U-shaped metal frame he had made. In the cellar she said she was 'stripped' and strapped to the frame and when

she started screaming she was gagged. Her father had sex with her and Mrs West then sexually abused her."

She said that her stepmother

was present on a number of occasions when Mr West had sex with her.

When she was 13, Mrs Davis said she went out to a pub with her stepmother and they had a social evening. Mrs West made her drink barley wine and she was drunk when they left.

Mrs Davis said: "Rosemary said we would be walking home. I started walking. All of a sudden my dad drove up and I was pushed in to the back of the van."

"My father came into the back. He was hitting me and Rosemary was being sarcastic and calling me names and kept hitting me and my father had sexual intercourse with me. She was just laughing. I didn't understand what was happening."

Mrs Davis said that when one of her teachers noticed that she was bruised on one occasion a

lady from the welfare "came round to 25 Cromwell Street. After she left Mr West gave her 'the biggest hiding' of her life."

She said: "Charmaine West, Mr West's first wife's daughter by another man, had antagonised Rosemary West and had refused to cry when she was beaten as she regarded this as a sign of weakness."

Mrs Davis added that when Mrs West told her that Charmaine had gone to live with her mother in Scotland Mr West was in prison at the time. The prosecution alleges that a child's remains found at the West's previous home at 25 Midland Road, Gloucester, are those of Charmaine.

She also said that Mr West had informed Mrs West about the fact that Shirley Robinson, a lodger at number 25, was ex-

pecting his baby. The remains of Shirley and an unborn child were found at the house.

Mrs Davis continued: "My stepmother was very upset and it was understandable, my father was humiliating her. After that it became very tense in the household. There were a lot of rows between my stepmother and my father."

"I came home from school one day very close to when Shirley's baby was due and I was told that Shirley had gone to Germany." She said that she never saw Shirley again.

Asked about the relationship between her father and stepmother, Mrs Davis said: "I believe they always told each other what they were doing. They had total trust."

Today the jury will visit 25 Cromwell Street.

IN BRIEF

Guy's campaigners lose legal battle

Campaigners yesterday lost their High Court attempt to save Guy's hospital in south London from radical changes they believe will be detrimental to the local community.

They claimed they had been "blatantly denied" the right to proper consultations before a decision to transfer patient and emergency services at Guy's to St Thomas' hospital.

But Mr Justice Laws rejected the application by Southwark Community Health Council, the Save Guy's Campaign and Simon Hughes, the local Liberal Democrat MP, to be allowed to seek a judicial review. He said they had delayed too long in launching their challenge.

Parents win claim

A man cleared of murdering a Scottish teenager has been ordered to pay £50,000 damages to her family. The ruling from the Court of Session came after Joe and Kate Duffy - whose daughter Amanda, 19, was found dead in May 1992 - raised a civil action against Francis Auld, 22, who was freed by the High Court in Glasgow after the criminal case against him was found not proven.

£15m heroin haul

Two Belgians were arrested and police seized 50 kilograms of heroin with a street value of up to £15m - one of the largest hauls uncovered in Britain this year - after stopping a van in Tottenham, north London.

Policeman shot

A police firearms officer underwent surgery at Bristol Royal Infirmary to remove a bullet from his right leg after being accidentally shot in the thigh by a colleague.

Murder acquittal

One of two Asian men accused of murdering Richard Everitt, 15, in a street attack was freed at the Old Bailey. Mrs Justice Steel directed the jury to find Abdul Hai, 20, not guilty of murder and four other charges "as a matter of law".

Baby death inquiry

A consultant anaesthetist has been suspended and an investigation launched after the death of a seven-week-old girl following after a routine operation at a hospital in Dudley, West Midlands.

'Log basket' record

A huge 14th-century bowl which had been used as a makeshift log basket fetched £128,000 when sold at Christie's in London - a record for a Mamluk piece of Egyptian-Syrian metalware from between the 13th and 16th centuries.

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

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Secrecy and stealth of the West deal

Marianne Macdonald explains the background to the selling of a story

It was the literary deal of the decade, and it was brokered with the stealth and secrecy of a military operation.

It was also the deal which jerked Peter Harris, the Official Solicitor, out of the slow-moving legal world and plunged him into the publishing shark-pit which accompanies the sale of a best seller.

For what he had to offer was exclusive access to the story of Fred West's life - a life story which he had spent months writing while confined in Birmingham's Winson Green prison awaiting trial on 12 charges of murdering women and young girls, including his first wife and his daughter.

If that were not enough, Mr Harris also had in his possession the mountain of police transcripts of interviews with West - 13 volumes in all - which revealed unknown details about the man.

The material formed part of West's estate, and had come under the administration of Mr Harris after West died intestate, having hanged himself in prison last New Year's Day.

In normal circumstances his widow, Rosemary, would have been appointed executor - but she had also been charged with serial murder and had waived any rights to the estate. Nor could the couple's adult children be given control, because they had sold their stories to national newspapers and so had a conflict of interest when it came to distributing the assets.

Mr Harris was left with the unpleasant task of "maximising" the profits from West's paper goldmine for the benefit of all his eight surviving children.

His solution was to instruct the literary agency Scott Ferris Associates in the spring to secretly sound out possible biographers and suggest appropriate candidates.

By August the agency's two leading figures, Scott Ferris and Gloria Ferris, had come up with a shortlist in about four. The potential biographers were asked to submit an outline of how they would approach the biography. They were then interviewed by Mr Harris and solicitors from Taylor Joynson Garrett. This secretive selection process resulted in the selection of Wansell, who was deemed most likely to produce a scholarly and unsensational account.

They had their biographer - not the best known, perhaps, but with a number of previous biographies on his CV. The next step was to find a publisher.

Not every publishing firm would be interested. And not every firm would be able to pay a top price. But a handful were approached, among them Hodder Headline.

"I saw an outline of what the book was going to contain which is confidential, but also more importantly the details of the resources that would be going into the book - including the autobiography and interviews with various people," says Alan Brooke, Headline's non-fiction publishing director.

"I also met Geoffrey Wansell when he outlined in more detail what he had discovered from the police interrogations and the handwritten autobiography. It was really that which convinced me it would be the definitive biography."

As a result Hodder Headline put the largest bid on the table - which may not be much under £1m - and were awarded the deal. "The remuneration was a large part of it," concedes John Linteker, the solicitor who arranged the author selection meetings.

The biography is expected to be in the bookshelves in the second half of next year. Leading article, page 20



Waiting for eviction: a villager of Holt's Field makes the most peace and quiet before the developers move in

Beleaguered Holt's Field faces its last stand as back bailiffs

DANNY PENMAN

The residents of a beautiful rural hamlet in South Wales won a brief respite from eviction yesterday when they turned back bailiffs of a property developer who wants to knock down their homes and build an executive housing estate.

Holt's Field, on the Gower peninsula near Swansea, has been the subject of a series of meetings.

The biography is expected to be in the bookshelves in the second half of next year. Leading article, page 20

were announced in June, only two months after the Phoneday change which gave numbers an extra "1".

Don Cruickshank, director-general of Ofcom, said: "This is not a climbdown. It is just that nobody liked any of the options we could think of."

He said that consultations since June proved that there is insufficient understanding of

consumers needs and those of the industry and that more work needs to be done.

Mr Cruickshank also said that six of six cities which run out of numbers in five years - Cardiff, Belfast, London, Portsmouth, Reading and Southampton - only Reading requires urgent action.

Reading is now to be given a new numbering system with an

"0118" code replacing the existing "01734" in order to increase the availability of numbers.

The city has three times the average national demand for numbers, partly because it attracts large businesses wanting thousands of direct dial lines for employees. Mr Cruickshank said that, in retrospect, it should be given a conservation order on the future of Phoneday when severance fees are given new codes.

BT, which spent £100m on the

Phoneday change in April, had attacked the June proposals as confusing for customers. Yesterday it said it supported Ofcom's decision to consult more widely before making sweeping change. The watching now

hopes to set out options for the future by October next year.

Editor switches to daily beat at the 'Telegraph'

PETER VICTOR

After nearly three weeks of waiting, Charles Moore was finally named editor of the *Daily Telegraph* last night. Dominic Lawson, currently in charge of the *Spectator* magazine, will replace Mr Moore as editor of the Sunday *Telegraph*.

Mr Moore, 38, takes over at the daily paper following the resignation of Max Hastings, who has now moved on to take charge of the *London Evening Standard*.

Mr Moore, who has edited the Sunday title since 1992, was deputy editor of *The Daily Telegraph* for two years and

also spent six years at the helm of *The Spectator*. In a statement, the *Telegraph* group said: "He was conspicuously successful in all these positions and we are confident that he is uniquely qualified to lead *The Daily Telegraph* to even greater heights of market leadership than it already enjoys."

But most observers believe the time it has taken for the newspaper's board to arrive at Mr Moore has cast a shadow over his appointment. One source confirmed that he was the third choice behind Andrew Neil, former editor of *The Sunday Times*, and Paul Dacre, editor of *The Mail*.

Mr Moore, who is also considered a virulent right-winger, said he was "honoured" to have been offered the job, which he regarded as the best in British newspapers.

Linford by Linford

I never knew the difference between being black or white until I went to school. Children can be so cruel. A group of them was messing around, chasing one another, when I decided to join in. I caught this girl and she said I couldn't play. When I asked why not she replied "My Mummy said I shouldn't play with blackies." I thought "I'm black!" I was only about eight years old but to this day I can still hear her voice and remember exactly what she said.

Read his autobiography, serialised exclusively in the *Independent*, from this Saturday

GRREAT MINDS DRINK ALIKE

GRRAHAM'S

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W. & J.
GRAHAM'S
PORT

The 12 accusations that threaten Howard

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

Derek Lewis's writ for onerous dismissal presents the gravest threat so far to the Home Secretary's career.

Crucially, it flatly contradicts Michael Howard's assertion to the Commons that he played no part in the removal of John Marriott, the Parkhurst prison governor, after the escape of three top-security inmates.

And it contains a potentially devastating catalogue of 12 alleged incidents of ministerial interference in Prison Service operations and business - which Michael Howard has always denied, and which breaches the "Framework Document", under which the Prison Service Agency was set up. They include delaying security improvements and changing them, interfering in staff relations, in prison discipline - and a requirement that Mr Lewis meet Mr Howard once a day to discuss operational matters.

The serving of the writ on Treasury lawyers yesterday coincided with the release of a dossier from Mr Lewis, seeking to discredit the findings of the withering report into prison security by Sir John Learmont, which led to his dismissal on Monday.

In a letter to the Home Secretary, written before his sacking, Mr Lewis claims the report contains numerous inaccuracies, is selective, and could have been more "thorough and complete".

The writ, claiming special damages for breach of his £125,000-a-year rolling contract, states that Mr Lewis met all the key performance targets set for him by Mr Howard, but that any deficiencies in his performance - which he denies - were "substantially caused or contributed to" by the "high level" of wrong involvement.

The writ alleges Mr Howard failed to provide extra resources needed to avoid delay in carrying out the security improvements recommended by the Woodcock inquiry following last September's escape of the IRA from Whitemoor prison - despite assurances given to the Commons.

In what will almost certainly further damage strained relations between the Home Office and prison officers, it accuses the Home Secretary of requiring Mr Lewis to make "highly critical" public statements of

actions by the Prison Officers' Association.

It also includes claims that Mr Howard delayed the recruitment of a personnel director for the Prison Service, pressured Mr Lewis to increase the severity of internal disciplinary action, required him to delay restructuring area manager arrangements and refused this summer to allow Mr Lewis to reduce the number of prisons holding Category A prisoners in order to improve security and reduce costs.

But the potential for damage goes even further. A High Court case is likely to circumvent the limitations of the Official Secrets Act, which Mr Lewis signed, and which has prevented him disclosing documents which support his claims.

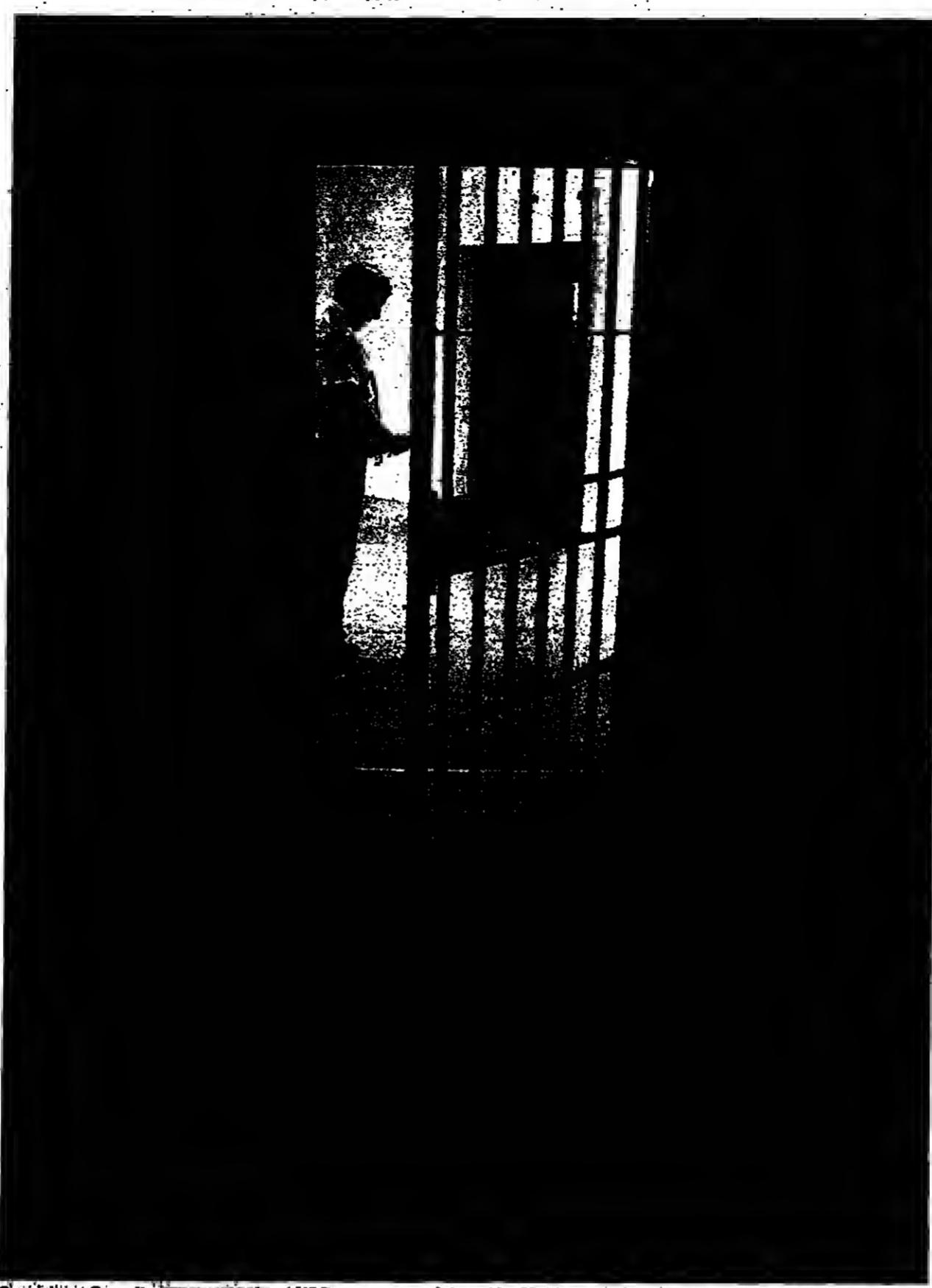
As well as the specific items listed in his writ, those supporting the former television executive say there are likely to be other matters, which have only so far been hinted at. They will include the controversial transfer of IRA prisoners and the supervision of high-profile prisoners such as Rosemary West and Myra Hindley.

Following the suicide of Fred West, it is alleged, that Mr Howard ordered that their cell doors be kept open with an officer outside - an order overturned when governors pointed out they might escape. Labour will pursue this and the removal of John Marriott in what will be a very rocky debate for Mr Howard in the Commons tomorrow.

Crucially, it has the potential to reveal whether the inquiry by Sir John Learmont, which will be at the heart of the breach of contract claim, had been "modified", as those who have rallied to the defence of Mr Lewis have suggested.

Certainly last week's letter to Mr Howard, which seeks to undermine the impact of the Learmont report, suggests that might be the case. The report omits a crucial piece of evidence from Sir Duncan Nichol - one of the Prison Board's non-executive directors - who described the inquiry's view of the Board's distance from the reality of prison life as "a travesty".

In the letter, Mr Lewis claims it was he and his fellow Prisons Board members who were trying to re-focus efforts onto security after years in which both ministers and governors had taken their "eye off the ball".



Open door: Security improvements at Whitemoor were delayed by Mr Howard, the writ claims. Photograph: Edward Webb

Dispute over governor's removal key to the issue

DONALD MACINTYRE
Political Editor

Nothing better illustrates the difficulties of disengaging the rights and wrongs of aftermath of the Parkhurst and Whitemoor escapes than what happened on 10 January. It was on that day that, according to yesterday's writ, Derek Lewis met the Home Secretary and was put under "extreme and unjustified pressure" to suspend John Marriott, the governor of Parkhurst.

"Suspension," for the purposes of the prison service disciplinary code, has a specific and technical meaning. What actually happened to Mr Marriott was that he was moved to another job within the prison service - at the agency's London headquarters, as Mr Lewis had wanted. "Suspension" would have meant that he would have been sent home on full pay until such time as the inquiry was completed.

According to Labour sources in touch with Mr Lewis, Mr Howard wanted Mr Marriott suspended and at some point after the meeting it was made clear to Mr Lewis by a senior Home Office official that if he did not do so Mr Lewis's own job might be at risk.

The latest statement issued by Conservative Central Office last night, and cleared by Mr Howard, says bluntly: "The governor was not suspended and Mr Howard did not tell Mr Lewis to suspend him." On whether Mr Howard raised the question of Mr Lewis's suspension the COO document is less illuminating. But it points out that he was perfectly entitled to discuss such matters since the Prison Service Framework Document says clearly that while the Home Secretary will not normally become involved in the day to day management... [he] will be expected to be consulted by the Director General on the handling of operational matters which could give rise to grave public or Parliamentary concern".

In the event, as Mr Howard explained to the Commons, he was "removed" from his current post and would not run a prison pending an investigation.

First, Mr Lewis allegedly used the word used for the transfer to be "moved" rather

than "removed". Second, he wanted there to be a delay so that the replacement for Mr Marriott could be phased in. Third, the fax merely gave Ms Drew the statement which Mr Howard was going to make in the Commons that afternoon, but Mr Howard's critics, briefed by Mr Lewis, say that this followed a disagreement about the terms under which Mr Marriott was to be transferred.

One reason why there is still widespread support for Mr Howard on the Tory backbenches - apart from the undoubted enthusiasm they have

for the tough new sentencing measures Mr Howard announced last week in Blackpool - is that most MPs expect him to be answerable for operational matters and frequently question him about them in the House.

But part of Mr Howard's problem is precisely that the more he admits to having been involved in such operational matters the less easy it is for him to pass the buck to the prison service and abrogate responsibility for its failures.

There are also some problems for Mr Howard's opponents as they confront him in today's Commons debate. First, Mr Lewis has yet to produce so far either the fax or any communication from a senior Home Office official which allegedly warned him that his own job was at risk if he did not suspend Mr Marriott - apparently because he is worried that to do so would be in breach of his obligations under the Official Secrets Act.

The other problem is that while part at least of the charge against Mr Howard is that he was less than wholly frank with the Home Affairs Select Committee on 25 January, so too, to judge by what he is now saying, was Mr Lewis.

He made it clear, in terms that now seem pregnant with meaning, that he had not instructed Ms Drew about when to transfer Mr Marriott. But when he was asked by the same select committee whether a politician "interfered with the operational matters on 10 January" and was that why Mr Marriott was treated in the disgraceful way he has been treated, Mr Lewis replied: "No that is not the case." And at an earlier stage of his evidence he said that "it was essential for operational reasons that the change in governor [of Parkhurst] took place immediately..." - rather conflicting with the suggestion that he had sought to delay the transfer.

Finally, there is the point that Mr Blair appeared in his first question in the House on Tuesday to elide the distinction between transfer and suspension. All of this gives Mr Howard some ammunition today. He will need it; it may prove to be the most important Commons speech of his political career.



Men at war: Michael Howard, left, and Derek Lewis

Director quits Prison Board

JASON BENNETTO

Pressure intensified on the Home Secretary yesterday with the resignation of a member of the Prison Board in protest at the sacking of Derek Lewis. A second board member is considering her position.

The latest blow to Michael Howard's authority came after a tense seven-hour meeting of the Prison Board yesterday.

The board, which comprises the Prison Service's director general, five full-time directors and four non-executive directors, makes day-to-day operational decisions. It monitors the Prison Service and makes recommendations to the Home Secretary on policy issues. Mr Howard appoints all its members.

Geoffrey Keays, a non-executive director and a director of the Prudential insurance company, announced yesterday that he was resigning after Mr Howard had failed to respond to his backing of Mr Lewis.

Mr Keays said in his resignation letter to Richard Tilt, acting director general of the Prison Service: "As you are aware, I believe strongly that it was in the best interest of the service that Derek Lewis remain as director general."

"I am assured that opinion was communicated to the Home Secretary but it was clearly one he did not share. I believe that in the circumstances it is appropriate that I resign from the board."

Another non-executive board member, Millie Banerjee, a BT director, said she was considering resignation and will make a final decision by tomorrow. A third non-executive member, Bill Bentley, a former manager at Shell, said he would not be resigning but expressed support for Mr Lewis.

A Prison Service spokesman reported that Mr Bentley said that he had spent the last five years as a non-executive director and during the past two and a half years had strongly supported Mr Lewis in the major programme of change that he had instituted.

The fourth member of the non-executive team, Sir Duncan Nichol, former chief executive on the NHS, is in Spain and could not attend.

Mr Tilt, who chaired the meeting, expressed his "personal gratitude" and that of the Prison Service for the support given by all the board's non-executive directors.

No statement was issued by behalf of the five executive directors after the meeting, which reconvened last night after a short break.

The five executive directors are Tony Pearson, director of operations north; Alan Walker, operations south; Dr Rosemary Wool, director of health care; Tony Butler, director of services; and David Scott, director of personnel. The position of director of security, which was held by Mr Tilt, who is standing in for Mr Lewis, remains vacant.

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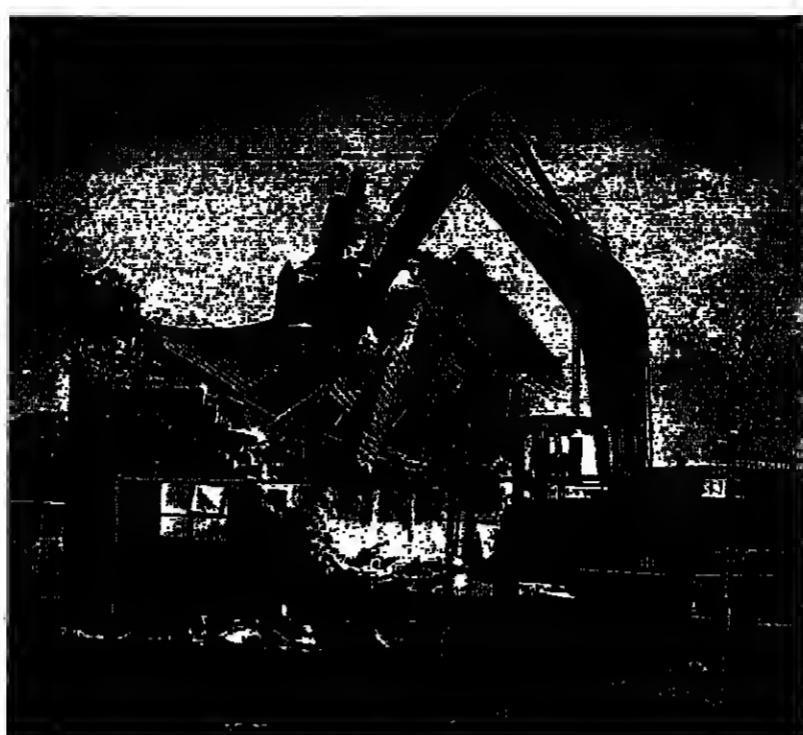
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4 news

House that William built is reduced to a pile of rubble



Handful of dust: A bulldozer ordered in by Charnwood Borough Council begins the task of demolishing the house (left and centre) owned by William Pickavant and his son, Lester (right)

Photograph: Paul Tonge/Raymonds

The final act in the drama had been a long time coming. For four years the Pickavants had used every legal measure at their disposal to prevent the local authority demolishing their cottage because they lacked planning permission.

But when the end came, it did so swiftly. Father and son were removed at dawn from the home - just outside Wymeswold, Leicestershire, and within three hours it was reduced to a pile of rubble.

Both men, William, 67, and Lester, 34, were arrested for their vain efforts to prevent the council's contractors moving to do the job that they had been ordered to do themselves three years previously.

Last night Lester Pickavant's girlfriend, Tricia Bloor, who lived at the house with him, accused Charnwood Borough Council of making them homeless, despite making applications earlier this year for permission to carry out the work.

But the authority stoutly defended its decision, saying that from the outset the Pickavants had been advised that they required planning permission, but carried on regardless without it.

Building work at Holly Lodge Farm was monitored from the time the bungalow was erected on the site of a previous cottage. Officials at the local authority said in a statement

that they were first led to believe the building was to be a barn. The Pickavants only conceded later that it would be a house, while ignoring advice that they need planning permission.

In 1992 the authority served an enforcement notice, demanding that William Pickavant, a retired soldier, demolish the house, an order against which he appealed.

But his appeal was rejected at a subsequent public inquiry and he was convicted this year in the crown court of failing to comply with the enforcement notice. The Recorder in the case urged Mr Pickavant to "come to his senses".

Still the Pickavants did not comply with the order and the council said in September that it planned to do the job itself "in

fairness to all those who have been refused planning permission and have abided by the law".

Yesterday morning, at 6.15am, officials from the council, accompanied by police, arrived to be met at the front gate by the Pickavants and Miss Bloor.

Police said they were concerned about the possibility of

violence. In another planning

case, charged with a breach of the peace.

But Miss Bloor was angry at the outcome of the dispute.

"I cannot believe the world exists with such people. I would never have thought any of this possible. It was a beautiful cottage, lined with oak beams. It was a typical rural home.

"I honestly thought someone would find a compromise to the problem. Where can we go now? Am I just going to have to buy a tent?"

Ian MacKinnon sees the bitter end of a four-year planning dispute

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Mackay hits back over divorce Bill

STEPHEN WARD
Legal Affairs Correspondent

Lord Mackay, the Lord Chancellor, yesterday defended his proposed Divorce Reform Bill against those who have said it would weaken the institution of marriage.

Some critics on the right of the Conservative Party are unhappy about plans to abolish the principle under which one partner is said to be at fault, and about reducing the time for the quickest divorces from two years to one.

The Bill is likely to be put to the Commons on a free vote as a matter of conscience, early in the next session of Parliament, but would only be implemented after a lengthy period of pilot schemes and training of new mediators.

In a speech to a Catholic mediation service, Marriage Care, the Lord Chancellor, a devout Christian, said the law could never save marriages that had

genuinely and irretrievably broken down. "The law, no matter how cleverly and carefully drafted, cannot force couples to live together. It cannot make people love and cherish each other, nor make them help, understand, respect and be tolerant of each other while they are husband and wife."

"Even if divorce were to be outlawed altogether, marriages would still break down and some partners would simply walk away."

"How much worse to leave the future arrangements for finance, property and especially for children unresolved, and for the new relationships into which those who walk away would be apt to enter."

"I am only too aware of the research in this area that indicates the damage to children caused by family conflict."

He told his audience, which included Catholic MPs from both parties: "The new system will not involve allegations of

fault, which can cause the couple to come into conflict at the outset. The applicant [for divorce] will be required to file a neutral statement that they believe their marriage has broken down."

He said the intention was that more marriages could be saved by the process, which encourages mediation, rather than encouraging both sides to appoint solicitors who would often turn the process into a confrontation.

"I do not believe a marriage is necessarily irretrievable, just because one of the parties has asked for divorce."

"In marriages where communication has been difficult between the couple, such a step may be a means of getting the marriage on the agenda, to make the other partner take the problems seriously."

"This is one of the main reasons underlying my wish to change the current divorce system, in particular, how the divorce starts."

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Dover

March 11
Rainbow

DAILY P
Backcombers

Dover rallies against French invasion threat

Government sell-off plans could see the tricolour flying over Kent's white cliffs. James Cusick reports

It is a moment for which the people of Calais have waited more than 400 years, since their port was last under English rule.

Now the port of Dover faces being bought up by Calais, its Channel counterpart, creating a conflict which may well become known as Le Stink.

That a corner of England might turn French overnight is due to the Government's imminent privatisation plans, which could mean the port of Dover will be put on the open market. Growing expectation that Calais is the most likely buyer has united the Kent town against the sell-off.

Calais was last under English rule between 1347 and 1558, and its loss caused Mary Tudor to pledge that the word Calais would be found carved upon her heart.

Yesterday, passions were running high again. Before the Sun newspaper had time to rewrite its famous "Hop off, you frogs" headline, two Labour MPs were gathering petition signatures in the town centre and handing out leaflets.

"Napoleon (sic) couldn't capture it," pronounced a Labour leaflet. If any opposition had been around, they could have said in their own leaflet: "Labour can't spell Napoleon."

However, there is little opposition to those who want Dover to retain the trust status it has enjoyed since 1606.

"Hitler couldn't destroy it," said another Labour leaflet. Before there was time to mention King John in Dover keeping before Flanders to surrender England to Pope Innocent III, a Labour messenger arrived with startling news: "Dame Vera's on board, isn't that wonderful!"

Dame Vera Lynn, whose solo battle charge had John Major running scared over his D-Day party plans, may now be the crucial combatant in the dark days of the privatisation battle.

Dover's mayor and the speaker of the ancient Cinque Ports (of which Dover is one) has already resorted to heavy artillery in his opening volleys. The Queen Mother, in her capacity as Warden of the Cinque Ports, has been contacted. "You will know," wrote George Hood, the mayor, in his letter to Clarence

House, "of the long and illustrious history of the port of Dover both in defence of the realm and in providing passage to the continent".

He said yesterday: "We are hoping for a positive response from Her Majesty because as you know she is the Lord Warden and Admiral of the Cinque Ports and Constable of Dover Castle."

It was a busy day for Mr Hood. After fielding inquiries from the local press, he found himself in demand from BBC South East and ITN, and then the French media in the prestigious form of *Le Monde*.

Did he comment on Le Stink? "No. As a politician all I can say is that I have known the mayor of Calais, Monsieur Jean Barre for 20 years. And I can understand why they would want to buy Dover to safeguard their own business."

Mr Hood said Calais depended on tourism for 70 per cent of its income. "They live off the strength of their port."

Back in the high street, the Labour team was working hard. Mark Watts, MEP for Kent East, said Labour was united in its opposition to the proposal. Rotterdam, Antwerp and Zeebrugge all remained committed to public ownership, he said. It was therefore unthinkable that Dover should be privatised.

The Labour MPs Glenda Jackson and Joan Walley, both transport spokeswoman, said they would fight the Government attempt to "cherry-pick Dover in a short-term exercise designed to provide money for the Treasury and tax cuts". Ms Walley said: "Dover is symbolically England. They are selling off the gateway to this country."

The Port of Dover's Harbour Board said yesterday it wanted the Government to reschedule the privatisation timetable as the effects of the Channel tunnel were yet to be fully resolved. Its chairman, John Molby, has asked the Secretary of State for Transport, Sir George Young, for "two full years of competition [with the tunnel] in order that the port's future can be less obscure than it is now".

Meanwhile in the town's pubs there was much talk of Winston Churchill, little talk of La Manche, and plenty of talk of Le Stink.

Church finds life at Rainbow's end

JOHN MCKIE

The Rainbow Theatre, one of London's most historic venues, has been sold to a mysterious Brazilian religious organisation for £2.35m.

The Rainbow, previously known as the Astoria, in Finsbury Park, also used to be a cinema before it closed in 1981, but was best known as one of Britain's greatest pop music venues.

It played host to The Beatles, David Bowie, Nat King Cole and The Clash, and was the venue where Rod Stewart kicked footballs into the crowd. The late Frank Zappa was attacked on stage by a deranged fan before he escaped to the Isle of Wight festival in 1970. And it was where 6,000 young fans of the Osmond Brothers went on the rampage in 1973 when they discovered that the

2,500 capacity gig had sold out. The Property group Prior Kirschel Properties, which bought the Rainbow last October, yesterday announced it had exchanged contracts with the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, a Brazilian organisation with bases in 25 countries. The organisation had tried to take over another rock venue, the Brixton Academy, as its British headquarters but it was bought by music promoters. The same promoters had previously been talking with PKP about the acquisition and restoration of the Rainbow.

The Universal Church - which has been rebuked by the Advertising Standards Authority for claiming its pastors could cure headaches, depression and insomnia - has kept a low profile since its interest in Brixton Academy was announced this summer.

DAILY POEM

Beachcombers

By Robert Nye

Flood-tide rising ebb-tide falling
Drowned the Queen in the bell:
Her heart lolled on the clapper
A toll or two, then fell.
Down where her mind had fallen,
Ringing a high-pitched knell.

Columbus locked in his cabin,
Drunk on Atlantic dew;
Dreamt of the crucifixion,
Riding at anchor; his crew
Lusted after blue dolphins,
Whispered: 'The Wandering Jew'.

No angelus no America
Have we to undiscovers
Who both have been beachcombers
Where the lost sea has no lover.
O Sea, run deep below me!
As you are high above her.

Robert Nye was born in London in 1939. He left school at 16 and lived for 5 years in a remote cottage in Wales, working on two collections of poetry that won him a Gregory award in 1963. He has been called "the inheritor of a poetic tradition that runs from Donne and Raleigh to Edward Thomas and Robert Graves", with a lyric voice "unlike that of any of his contemporaries". His novel *Reisefuhrer* won the Hawthornden and *Guardian* fiction prizes for 1976, and he has been poetry critic of the *Times* for the last two decades. This poem is taken from *Collected Poems*, published this week by Sinclair-Stevenson at £15.



Under a cloud: Government privatisation plans, and the possibility that the port will be bought up by Calais, have cast a shadow over Dover's future. Photograph: Brian Harris

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news

Murder trial Briton 'caught out'

STEPHEN VINES
Singapore

John Martin Scripps, the Briton on trial in Singapore for three murders, admitted to the prosecution yesterday that it had caught him out over discrepancies in his accounts of events after one of the killings.

Mr Scripps, 35, accused of chopping up a South African in a Singapore hotel and two Canadians in Thailand, has exasperated prosecutors with his lack of memory of events.

He admits killing the South African Gerard Lowe, but claims it was an unpremeditated attack following a homo-sexual advance.

He says he knows nothing about the deaths of the two Canadians who were staying in a hotel room next to him in Thailand and shared a cab with him from the airport.

Mr Scripps said that the passports of the deceased, along with credit cards and other papers, were placed in his baggage by an unnamed "British friend" whom he described as a drug trafficker in his mid-twenties.

He has told the court he got to know this man through his past activities in the drug trade. He also alleged that the friend was responsible for chopping up and disposing of Mr Lowe's body in a river. He said he cannot reveal the man's identity because it would jeopardise the lives of his family.

On the second day of cross-examination by the prosecution yesterday, Mr Scripps gave a long account of how he returned to his hotel room the day after

Mr Lowe's murder to find that his "friend" had removed all his identification documents and most of his money.

Going over the sequence of events that followed, he gave a version which contradicted an earlier statement made to the police.

When, under intense questioning, the discrepancies were pointed out by Jennifer Marie, the Deputy Public Prosecutor, he conceded: "I think you've caught me out."

Mr Scripps maintains that his inability to remember events after the murder of Mr Lowe, 32, is due to having gone on a drinking binge after the killing and also because he was drugged with sedatives to calm him down.

During the past two days Mr Scripps, who faces the death penalty if convicted of premeditated murder, has answered most questions with either "I don't know" or "I can't be sure".

Showing increasing signs of exasperation, Ms Marie declared to him yesterday: "This is your stock answer - 'I don't know'."

The defence is calling no witness other than Mr Scripps, who is struggling to provide collaboration for his story. He frequently contradicts himself.

Mr Scripps has alluded to his criminal past on a number of occasions, giving the court details of how to forge credit card signatures and cash stolen travellers' cheques, and indicated in support of a presumed peace mi-

As it was, the rising went ahead with a bloody cootest for

JOHN CROSSLAND

Sir Roger Casement, the flawed martyr of Irish independence, sailed at Easter 1916 to try to prevent rather than foment rebellion. Cabinet and Home Office papers released yesterday by the Public Records Office reveal.

The transcript of his interrogation by Special Branch, which was withheld at his trial at the Old Bailey for high treason, confirms the belief that the 56-year-old convert to the cause of Irish nationalism threw away whatever defection he might have had by not allowing defence counsel to call evidence in support of a presumed peace mi-

point and he was handed over to Special Branch, which had been tracking his movements since he left Ireland before the First World War for New York, and then Germany, where he tried to raise an Irish brigade from Irish prisoners of war — the basis for the charge of treason under a 1351 Act.

Interrogated at Scotland Yard by Special Branch and Captain "Blinker" Hall, the celebrated naval intelligence specialist, he refused to admit charges that he had been paid by the Germans to sail to Ireland with his brigade and lead the rising. He said: "The proposal came upon me as a thunderclap. I said [to the Germans] I have been here for a year and a half and begged you again and again to send rifles to Ireland

and you refuse always. Now you spring it at my head at the 11th hour, when I have long given it up, of hoping to arm my countrymen. At last you have come up with the offer of belated help and it synchronises with what I

can only regard as a hopeless uprising in Ireland where my countrymen will be shot down. Obviously I think it is cowardly, dastardly and I go alone.

"They wanted me to take all my Irish boys. Those young men ..." The interrogator said "So?" Casement answered: "More than 50. We had a terrible fight with the Germans and I won the day. I said I won't do it. I shall not have it said I handed these men over to the hangman."

The Germans insisted instead that an arms ship, the *Aud*, should carry 20,000 rifles and a few machine guns for the rising, which Casement, among others, saw only as a last resort at some future date. She was scuttled when intercepted by a British patrol boat.

Casement said he thought the Germans planned to stage a Zeppelin attack in support of the rising but said he knew nothing of a second arms shipment that would only have been sent if he gave a signal.

Just before Casement's execution on 3 August 1916, the Attorney General, F.E. Smith, later Lord Birkenhead, and a former political opponent in Ireland, wrote a minute agreeing with Home Office plans to feed the press stories undermining the "abort missio" story.

The Home Office "thought it possible to get two papers, the *Morning Post* and the *Daily Chronicle*, to write stories pointing out that the *Aud* was in close attendance to Casement" and that when he landed he brought a large Irish flag with him.

Traitor's fate: Sir Roger Casement, left, in the dock at the Old Bailey at his trial for treason, and right, crowds gathering outside court as the trial caught the public imagination

'Traitor' hoped to prevent Irish rebellion



Sir Roger: Hanged for treason

the Dublin General Post Office which left 450 rebels, soldiers and civilians dead.

The papers, from the Public Records Office in Kew, west London, show the lengths to which the British government was prepared to go in suppressing this interpretation of Casement's mission, which, poignantly, was regarded in further evidence as a madcap venture by US Irish republicans and its German sponsors.

Crucified humiliatingly, on the beach at Tralee, after Casement, a retired civil servant, had paddled ashore in a canvas boat from a U-boat that had brought him and two companions — one who turned King's evidence against him — from Wilhelmshaven. Two policemen took him away at rifle-point and he was handed over to Special Branch, which had been tracking his movements since he left Ireland before the First World War for New York, and then Germany, where he tried to raise an Irish brigade from Irish prisoners of war — the basis for the charge of treason under a 1351 Act.

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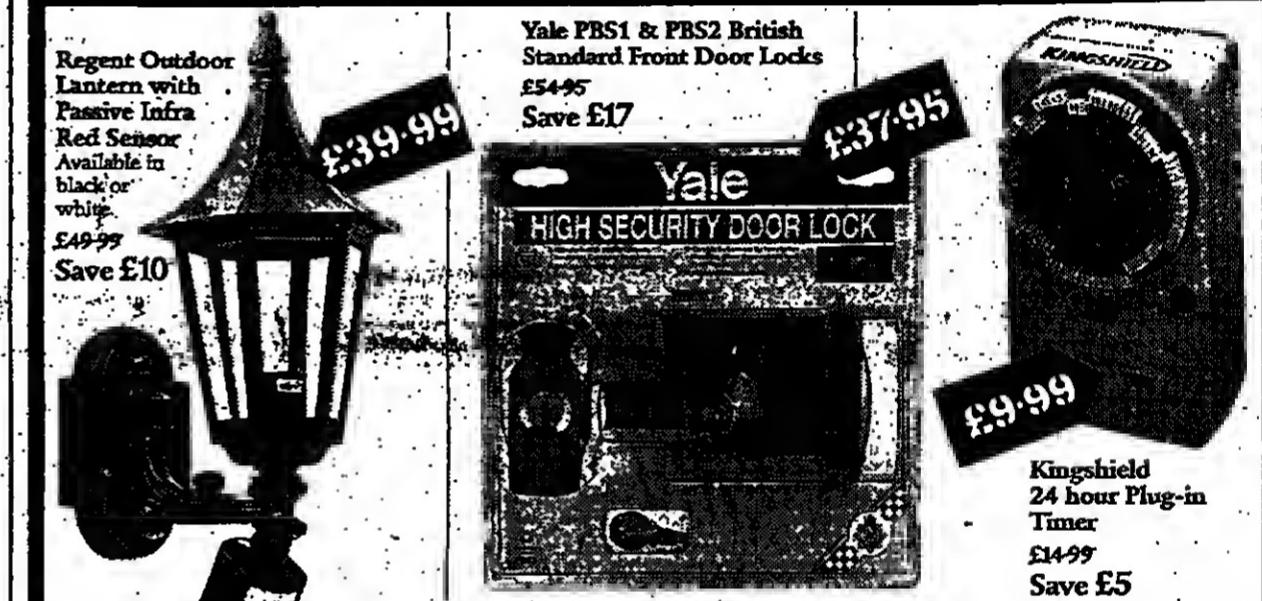
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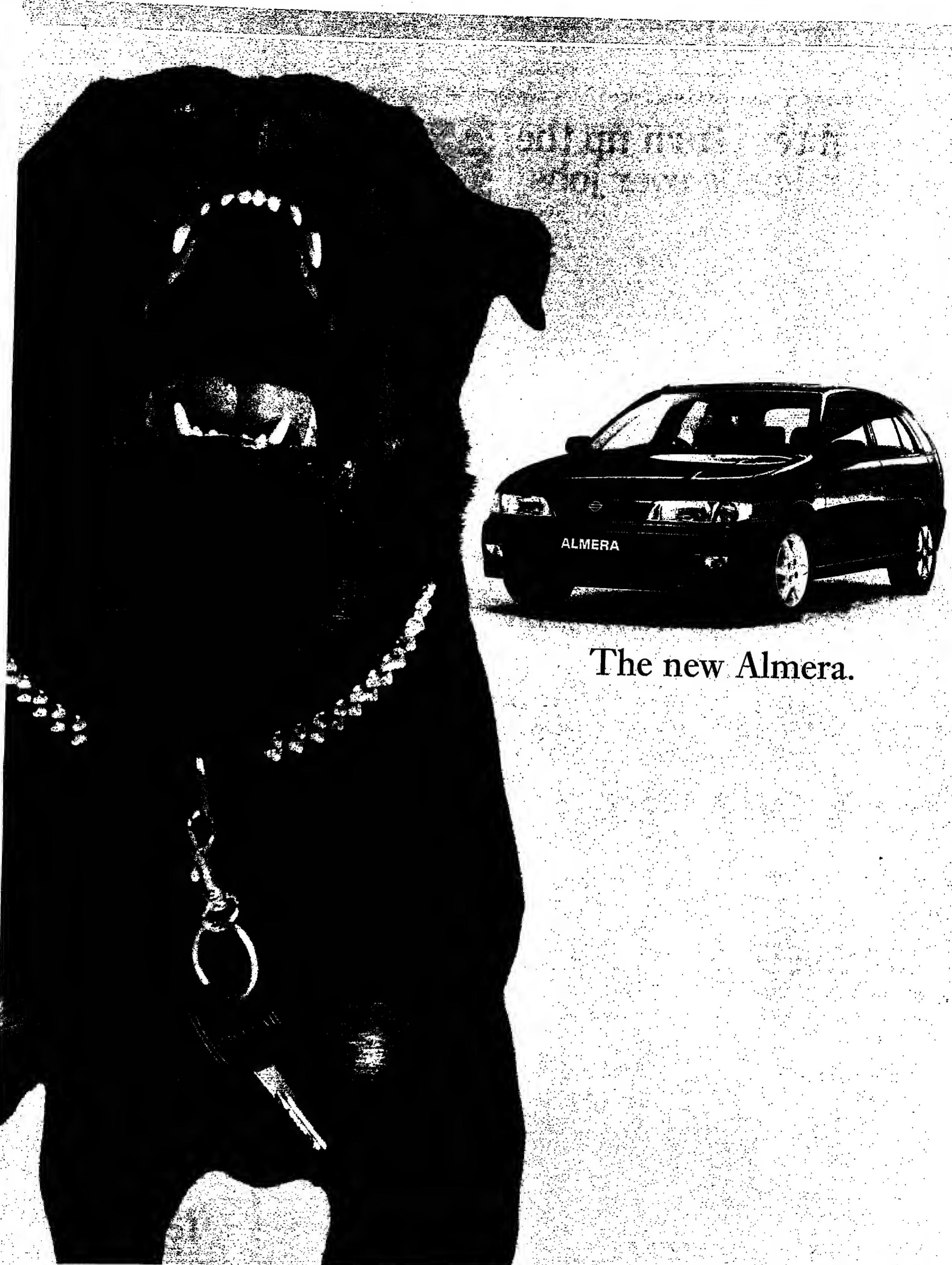
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news

Strikes on Merseyside: Green Goddesses stand by as stoppages set to escalate dispute with critical nationwide implications

Firefighters turn up the heat in battle over jobs

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

Fidel Castro stares down on the organisers of the two-month-old campaign of industrial action by firefighters on Merseyside. Senior managers believe that the pictorial presence of the Cuban leader is somehow appropriate.

Union officials venture that an apt picture for the office of the fire chiefs might be that of a certain Italian leader with a fondness for uniforms and a yearning for Abyssinia.

The personal enmity between the two sides, however, belies the seriousness of the dispute and the importance of its outcome to Britain's fire service.

Superficially the argument is more of a chip pan fire than a serious conflagration. The Fire Brigades' Union has registered its determination to resist a

management plan to shed 30 jobs out of 1,336 through natural wastage, and to cut annual leave by three days.

Fire authorities all over the country are faced with budgetary constraints and are watching the Merseyside conflict with considerable interest. One senior management source in the North-West has been told that the Home Office "will not allow" management to lose the next strike.

Next year local government is expecting even tougher cuts with the possibility of compulsory redundancies - an eventually the union has pledged to oppose with a national strike.

On Merseyside the FBU has already staged nine separate stoppages since 17 August; eight strikes of up to nine hours and a day-long walkout which ended at midnight last night.

Yesterday 800 Merseyside

firefighters took their argument to the Fire 95 conference in Harrogate for senior officers where they lobbied Home Office minister, Baroness Blatch.

In route to North Yorkshire yesterday, a fire station officer from Amritsar said that management would be "back for more" if they agreed to cuts. "We could lose another 100 jobs next year if they win this dispute. It's the thin end of the wedge."

The strikers are convinced that right is on their side. It is a conviction that seems to have grown since the dispute started. While eight out of 10 firefighters voted for nine-hour strikes, nine in 10 backed an extension of the stoppages to 24 hours. All employees up to and including senior divisional officers have supported the action.

Yesterday 800 Merseyside



Rank and file: Union members applauding a speaker at a rally in Harrogate yesterday

Photograph: Bob Collier

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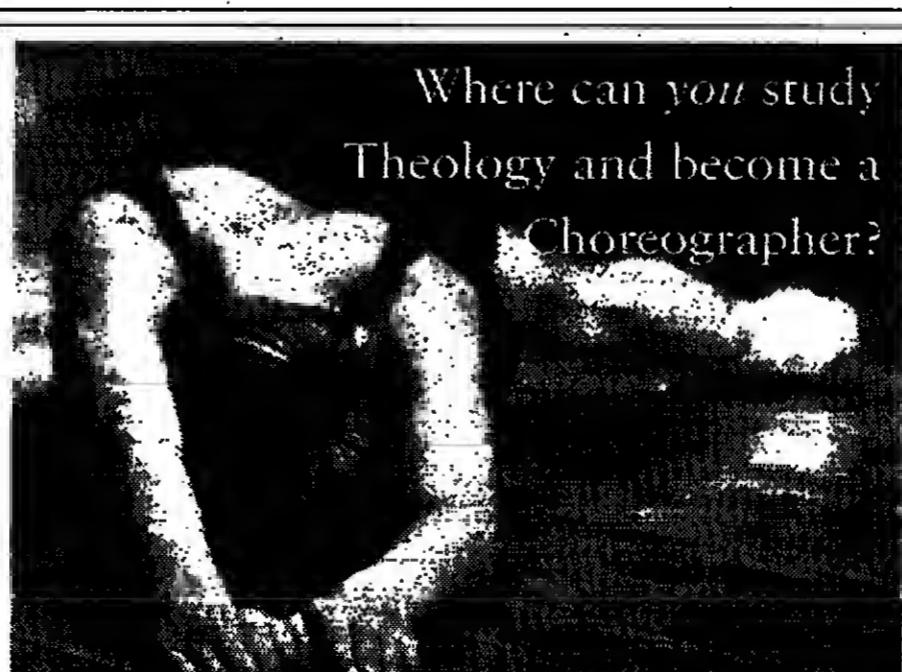
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Spending on lottery 'lower than expected'

GLENDA COOPER

The National Lottery may have gripped the nation's heart, but not its wallet, the latest survey says.

The average household spent £2.10 - less than 1 per cent of its weekly expenditure - on the lottery in January to March this year, the Central Statistical Office revealed.

Only a tiny percentage spent more than £5 a week on lottery tickets. Caution seemed justified, with average winnings a meagre 80p, less than half the average weekly stake.

And the idea that the poor spend more of their income on lottery tickets proved to be unfounded, according to the report. Spending ranged from 70p in the poorest tenth of the population to £3 in the third richest group. The most well-off spent £2.80.

As a percentage of expenditure the poorest tenth of the population were spending 0.8 per cent on the lottery. This figure did not alter by more than 0.1 per cent until the top 20 per cent of the population. Even they spend only between 0.5 and 0.7 per cent.

The annual survey, which monitors changes in family spending, showed that in all areas families appear to be keeping a tight rein on spending despite increases in income. While weekly income went up by £17 to £369.30, average weekly spending only went up by £5 to £283.60.

The divide between rich and poor continued to widen. The poorest fifth of households had an average income of £79 a week, compared with the top 20 per cent, who had an average income of £853.70. One-parent families with one child had an average weekly income of £164.60.

Between 1985 and 1994-5, weekly income from wages and salaries declined from 76 per cent to 64 per cent of total income.

The report's editor, John King, said this was due to an

ageing population, which got most of its income from pensions.

Households with the largest disposable income were in the South East, with an average £343.20 - 42 per cent more than the lowest region, Wales (£241.50). Over a fifth of Welsh household income came from social security benefits, compared with a tenth in the South East.

Expenditure varied greatly with different levels of income. While the highest 10 per cent were spending £625.90 per week, the poorest 10 per cent spent over £500 less than this, at £82.10.

Food, at £50.40 per week, remained the highest weekly expense, except in the South-East and South-West where housing overtook this.

In all areas food and housing accounted for a third of all household expenditure. Northern Ireland spent the largest percentage on food [21.3 per cent], with the South-East spending least.

Mr King said that two consumer durables accurately reflected the income of the households - CD players and dishwashers.

Only 15 per cent of the poorest households own a CD player, whereas nearly three-quarters of the richest 10 per cent do.

Similarly, 2 per cent of the poorest households have a dishwasher, compared with 55 per cent of the richest.

Ownership of telephones has jumped dramatically since 1975 when only 52 per cent possessed one. Now 91 per cent of households possess one.

Video-recorders have also become a must-have item, with fewer than a third owning one in 1985, compared with more than three-quarters last year.

Two-thirds of households now have a car or a van and one in five households have two cars. Half of all households now have a tumble dryer.

Family Spending: A report on the 1994/95 Family Expenditure Survey, HMSO £54.95.

Analysis of average weekly expenditure

by households in the UK 1994-95

Food: £50.40	Northern Ireland: Largest amount of washing machines but lowest proportion of tumble driers.
Housing: £265.40	Scotland: Biggest spenders on spirits and liqueurs, having only 4th biggest expense at £54 a week.
Leisure Goods & Services: £195.10	Wales: Lowest weekly expenditure of all regions although spending on tea 50 above UK average.
Transport: £105.10	South West: Biggest spenders on postage, highest caravanning.
Entertainment & leisure: £82.60	South East excluding London: Highest expenditure on pets, hairdressing and beauty treatment.
Household Goods & Services: £221.70	Greater London: Highest spenders on housing, the telephone and bottled water.
Clothing and footwear: £17.10	East Anglia: Lowest spenders on tobacco and alcohol but highest proportion of central heating.
Fuel and power: £12.80	West Midlands: Spend almost 40 per cent above UK average on motoring and fares.
Alcoholic drink: £12.20	Yorkshire & Humberside: Biggest purchasers of tobacco and over 50 a week spent on beer and cider.
Personal Goods & Services: £101.80	The North: Spend most on alcohol and smallest expenditure on hairdressing and beauty treatments.
Tobacco: £5.60	North West: Biggest spenders on holiday, lowest proportion of central heating.
Miscellaneous: £22.30	

'Glaring error' on Brent Spar toxic waste

NICHOLAS SCHOON
Environment Correspondent

Shell's assessment of the toxic, hazardous contents of the Brent Spar was professional and fairly accurate with one glaring exception, an independent certification organisation reported yesterday.

Oslo-based Det Norske Veritas (DNV) confirmed Green-

peace's own estimate of the oil content of Shell's redundant storage buoy was grossly exaggerated because it was based on "obvious misinterpretations". The environmental group admitted the error last month.

The oil company had to abandon sea dumping after Greenpeace's protest inspired a European petrol boycott. The 14,500-tonne Spar is now an-

chored in a Norwegian fjord while Shell works on new disposal plans. DNV was paid £200,000 for its investigation.

Shell hired DNV because Greenpeace complained there had been no independent checks before Shell got Government approval to dump the massive structure in deep water.

It found Shell may have seriously underestimated the quantity of polychlorinated biphenyls, PCBs. These are used in electrical equipment and are among the most persistent, toxic non-pesticide chemicals ever mass-produced for peaceful purposes. Their manufacture is now banned.

While Shell estimated there were fewer than 20 grams on board, DNV said there could be up to eight kilograms - 400

times as much. PCBs may be in small capacitors fitted to each one of 250 light fittings.

DNV said that because it found out about the capacitors fairly late in its inquiry, it was not yet certain whether they did contain PCBs. But given the age of the Spar - 20 years - "that would be the usual thing", said DNV vice president Ole-Arnes-Hafnor.

Shell said it would be going back on board next week to check. DNV pointed out that the capacitors could easily be removed for safe disposal.

Shell's assessment of the quantities of oil, radioactivity and toxic metals in the Spar were broadly correct, said DNV, one of the world's leading ship certification bodies. It slightly underestimated the levels of

some and overestimated others.

The oil company estimated there was a total of 53 tonnes of oil and oily wax in the Spar. DNV said there was 74 to 103 tonnes. Greenpeace's estimate was 5,500 tonnes, but it later admitted that it took samples from the wrong place.

Both Shell and Greenpeace welcomed the DNV report and accepted its findings.

Shell said that even if it had underestimated the radioactivity and pollutants in the Spar by a factor of ten, dropping it 7,000 feet in the Atlantic seabed would not have posed a significant environmental threat. But John Wybrey, Shell UK's corporate affairs director, confirmed Shell would not propose sea dumping for obsolete installations again.

Angel spreads her wings in Theatreland

A new impresario may revolutionise the West End stage, writes David Lister

At 42, Donna Knight is strikingly elegant, her designer clothes out of the latest editions of *Vogue* making a sharp contrast to the dingy offices at the Ambassadors, where she is supervising the new opening of *Burning Blue* tonight. Her father ran a New Jersey printing company and her mother was a Montessori teacher. After a brief career as an actress, she moved into film production, working at MGM, as PA to one of the company's top moguls, the late David Susskind, and ran a theatre group in New York.

As well as producing plays in London she also intends to make films in Britain.

"My passion is championing new writers," she said yesterday. "I want to work with them over here, develop new works and put them on. I want quality as opposed to commercialism. I'm very sad that producers don't always support quality theatre. Why does theatre in London and New York underestimate the intelligence of the public?"

"I try to see everything, and love discovering new actors. And the business is so much eas-



Burning ambition: Donna Knight's vision for the future will give a platform to new writers but may be bad news for musicals. Photograph: Jane Baker

ier in London than New York. I can put on five plays here for the cost of one play on Broadway. Also the environment is friendlier here and audiences more literate."

Mrs Knight is vague about where the money for her ven-

tures comes from, referring only to "private money, my husband and I have accumulated over the years, money we have put aside".

Some of that money will now go towards setting up her own film production company. She

plans to produce a film by an American writer, possibly starring Hollywood's rising star, Sandra Bullock, but with British actors and technicians.

For now, some of the differences between London and New York theatre still surprise

her. One reason *Burning Blue* had to close at the Haymarket, she said, was because of the hot summer and the fact the theatre had no air conditioning. "Every theatre in New York has air conditioning."

If Mrs Knight keeps to her

pledge of championing new writing, London theatre could change radically. Janet Holmes A Court, who owns 11 West End theatres, plans to put on more European drama. The pre-eminence of the musical in the West End may be threatened.

Police in £1m raid on 'drugs farm'

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

Police raided a secret "drugs farm" hidden in the centre of Manchester yesterday and seized hundreds of extremely powerful cannabis plants known as "skunk weed".

The plants, which detectives claim are worth at least £1m, were being grown in a makeshift greenhouse under plastic sheeting and dozens of fluorescent strip lights inside a derelict warehouse.

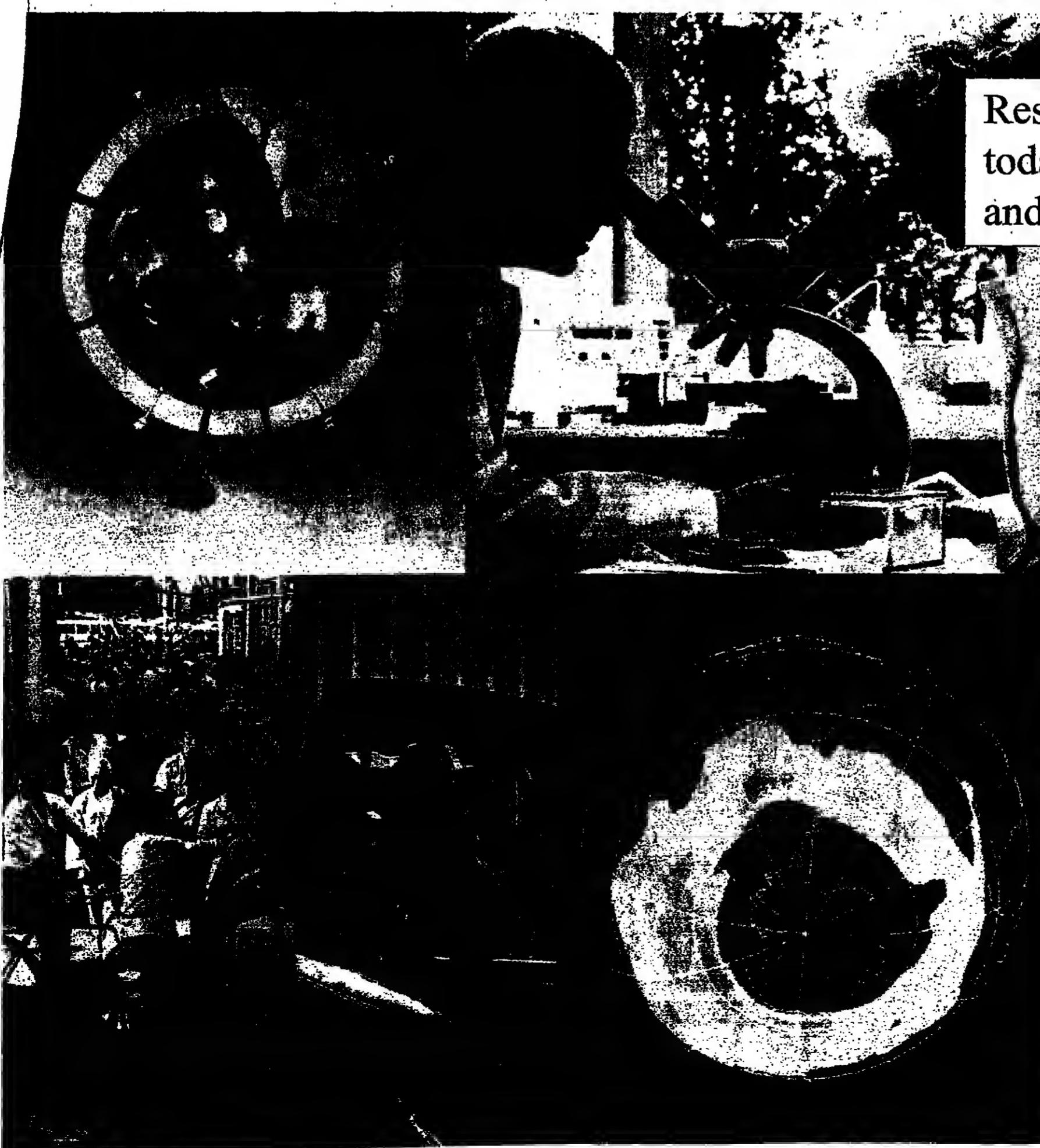
Four men were arrested in Manchester after the operation recovered what police believe to be the largest amount of the drug ever found growing in the UK.

The drug, known as "skunk" because of its pungent smell, is much more powerful than normal cannabis and each plant is worth about £1,000.

Also known as "super skunk", most of it is smuggled in from the Netherlands although increasingly it is being grown in Britain. There is a growing demand for the drug because of its potency, a fact identified by dealers who have increased their supplies in recent years.

At about £15 for a sixteenth of an ounce (1.75 grams) - about enough for three very strong cigarettes - it is twice as expensive as normal cannabis.

Spending in lottery power than expected



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Balkan diplomacy: Belgrade and Sarajevo to exchange liaison offices as ceasefire starts to take hold in the north-west Serbia and Bosnia take first steps to recognition

EMMA DALY
Sarajevo
CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
London

The governments of Bosnia and rump Yugoslavia, which comprises Serbia and Montenegro, agreed yesterday to open liaison offices in each other's capitals, a move that should pave the way to full diplomatic recognition.

Future Bosnian elections were also discussed at talks yesterday in Sarajevo and Belgrade, with international mediators emphasising their determination to counter the effects of "ethnic cleansing" and restore a multi-national electorate. The three mediators - the American Richard Holbrooke, Carl Bildt of the European Union and Igor Ivanov of Russia - warned of a tortuous road ahead, but sounded fairly optimistic about the peace talks at the end of the month in the United States.

"The road ahead is very daunting and we are overwhelmed by the tasks ahead of us," Mr Holbrooke said, describing the deal to open liaison offices as "a small step on a difficult and long road". But Mr Bildt, who discussed the elections on Tuesday night with Momcilo Krajisnik, a senior Bosnian Serb official, said he expected a vote within a year.

"We don't want elections that ratify ethnic cleansing," Mr Bildt told reporters. One suggestion is that Bosnian citizens may be entitled to vote by post for representatives in their pre-war districts. But that raises the question of how to get the Bosnian Serb secessionist regime in Pale to agree to a deal that would overturn all its efforts to carve out an ethnically pure state. Under the post-war principles agreed so far, the Serb entity in Bosnia would provide a third of the MPs for a national

parliament; their homogeneity would be seriously compromised if Muslims and Croats expelled from Serb-held lands were able to vote for those MPs.

The week-old ceasefire appeared to be holding yesterday, although UN troops have been prevented from getting to the new front line after rapid advances by Croat and Bosnian government troops in the past month, with more atrocities against non-Serbs discovered in their wake.

The UN refugee agency yesterday released a report claiming that more than 100 non-Serb civilians had been killed in Bosanski Novi, in north-west Bosnia, before the Serbs withdrew, and that there had been more rape and murder of non-Serbs in Prijedor. Local sources said the troops responsible belonged to the notorious Serb commander "Arkan".

Bosnian government forces on Tuesday finally gave British peace-keepers access to some of the territory they have gained - but it was a road captured nearly a year ago, and 20 miles south of the new front line.

The British UN forces yesterday sent their first convoy down route "Albatross", the road from Kupres, which was captured by Bosnian-government troops last November, to Bugojno. The UN had hoped to be able to use the route - a third road into central Bosnia - almost immediately, but the Bosnians denied access until they had pushed more than 20 miles to the north.

British UN troops in Bosnia remain infuriated by what they describe as "cat and mouse" tactics used by Bosnian government forces to keep them away from areas now far from the battle lines. The speed of the Croat-Muslim advance in north-west Bosnia has left a vacuum unsupervised by the UN.



Refugee: French peace-keepers handing out food in Gorazde after Serbs finally allowed the UN vehicles through

MICHAEL SHERIDAN
Diplomatic Editor

The European Union has rebuffed Croatia by deciding it will receive no future privileges in its dealings with the EU but will be treated the same as other "successor states" to the former Yugoslavia under new "Balkan agreements" with Brussels.

It is a sign that Croatia's human rights violations and authoritarianism have ruined its aspirations to advance towards EU membership ahead of any rival Balkans states. It will cast a shadow over the campaign by President Franjo Tudjman's "free-market" HDZ party for elections on 29 October.

EU-Croatia talks on a trade and co-operation deal were frozen after the Croatian August offensive against Serb rebels, which boosted Mr Tudjman's popularity. The conquest was followed by accounts of looting and murders of Serb civilians. International efforts are now under way to persuade the Croatian leadership to desist from an attack on the Serb redoubt of Eastern Slavonia.

The new policy, formulated in the expectation of an overall peace settlement, is a decisive rejection of Mr Tudjman's assertion that Croatia has a greater claim than its neighbours to represent the values of west European civilisation. It is not clear whether Germany and Austria, Croatia's closest friends in the EU, will continue to argue that Zagreb should receive better treatment than Belgrade or Sarajevo. That argument has already met high-level opposition from negotiators who believe that, unless the EU takes a collective approach, each Balkan state will try to advance itself and block its rivals, creating new tensions.

European Union leaders have therefore been urged to evolve a common set of framework agreements with all the states south of Slovenia and north of Greece. They are: Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia (in its Muslim-Croat and Serb constituents), Albania and Macedonia. The aim is to avoid any impression the old Yugoslavia is being recreated.

Photograph: Reuter

Ohio base chosen to instil an air of peace

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

It does not quite have the class of Camp David. But as a site for the Bosnian peace talks the Wright-Patterson Air Force base, in western Ohio, is perhaps even more suitable - bristling with the instruments of US air power which, operating under Nato guise, did as much as anything to bring the reluctant participants to the bargaining table in the first place.

In normal times, Wright-Patterson is a sprawling facility home to servicemen and their families, 23,000 in all, best known for its links with the Wright brothers and the world's largest museum of military avi-

ation. But as the Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, announced yesterday, from 31 October it will be where Presidents Milosevic of Serbia, Tudjman of Croatia and Izetbegovic of Bosnia, prodded by 200 aides and diplomats from the Contact Group, will try for a settlement of the Balkan war.

In most respects it fits the bill perfectly. The base, outside Dayton, is big enough to house everyone in ample, similar quarters. It is, by definition, secure and well protected. One hour's flight from Washington and New York, it is easily accessible for important visitors like Mr Christopher, but too far away for an instant dash by a disgruntled negotiator to the net-

work television studios. The ability to keep the press at bay is among Wright-Patterson's greatest charms. It "affords the kind of privacy that is necessary, we believe, to conduct a successful negotiation", Mr Christopher told the House National Security Committee. Apart from a pre-talks tour of the site, and the formal opening ceremony, the media will be kept beyond the perimeter.

A "partial news black-out" will operate, the State Department said, and what briefings there are will be held in Washington. If there is a "Dayton agreement" it will be finalised there and signed formally in Paris a few days later. But, as US officials acknowledge, there is

planned participation of up to 25,000 US ground troops in a Nato peace-keeping force in Bosnia. Despite insistence by the Clinton administration that the force will be strong enough to intimidate any foe, Republicans especially are adamant that Congress be consulted before a final decision is taken.

It would be a "tragic judgement" to bypass Congress, Senator John McCain of Arizona said. But Mr Christopher retorted that the President would not be bound by a resolution barring deployment of US troops in Bosnia, noting President Bush's determination to send a far larger force to the Gulf five years ago, whatever the opinion of Congress.

Christopher: Believes Ohio has the necessary privacy

no guarantee the talks will succeed - one reason they not be held at Camp David.

Such apprehensions are shared on Capitol Hill, where misgivings are widespread at the

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Croatia claims rebuff by EU

French to join nuclear free zone in the Pacific

DAVID USBORNE
New York

Britain, France and the United States are to announce shortly that they are joining the South Pacific nuclear-free zone — once the French nuclear tests at Mururoa Atoll are finished.

It will be seen as an effort by London and Washington to help France to rebuild diplomatic and political bridges in the region, shattered by the resumption of tests last month. Paris will also commit itself to closing its test facilities at Mururoa once it has completed its experiments in May.

All three Western nuclear powers — France, Britain and the US — are expected to pledge adherence to the 1985 Treaty of Rarotonga, which established a nuclear-free zone in the South Pacific.

The announcement, to be made simultaneously in Paris, London and Washington, is likely as early as tomorrow, diplomatic sources in New York confirmed. "It is 99 per cent certain, although there are a couple of wrinkles left to iron out," one European diplomat said.

Suzanna van Moyland of the Vertic nuclear non-proliferation pressure group, said: "This is a very positive development for the region. But there is no reason why Britain and the US should not have signed long ago. It is interesting that they are holding back for France."

The timing of the initiative is far from arbitrary. On Saturday, leaders of 150 nations arrive in New York for three days of speeches to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. Many feared the event would be marred by protests against the French President, Jacques Chirac.

Britain has been searching for a way to mitigate criticism of its failure to join the condemnation of France. John Major will be asked to explain Britain's low profile at the summit of Commonwealth heads of state and government next month in New Zealand.

By signing protocols attached to the Treaty of Rarotonga, the three countries will commit themselves to its main provisions forbidding the use,

storage, testing or dumping of any nuclear explosive devices in the South Pacific. Russia and China are already signatories. Until now Britain in particular has been hesitant about such a pledge.

Reaction to the announcement among nations that have been most upset by the French tests is not likely to be ecstatic. While announcing its intention to join the treaty, France can still give no indication of when exactly it will put pen to paper. Only at that time will it be obliged to cease using Mururoa for nuclear testing. None the less, until this point France has never given any undertaking to close its Pacific nuclear facilities.

"The fact that France and the other Western powers are going to take this amazingly important step should help cool tempers," a European diplomat insisted.

Ironically, Australia only yesterday voiced formal disappointment before the UN's General Assembly that the three countries had still not joined the Rarotonga Treaty. The deputy Australian ambassador to the UN, Richard Rowe, said an announcement reversing that stance would mitigate some, but not all, of the ill-feeling against France. "It's good news as far as it goes, but our position still remains that France has got to stop testing."

On the broader issue of testing, the US is pressing for a statement from the nuclear powers setting 30 April 1996 as the deadline for agreeing a final text in the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban talks in Geneva. President Bill Clinton, who may commit his administration to the deadline when he addresses the UN on Sunday, is anxious to accelerate work towards the test ban.

If a text can be settled by the end of April, the way would be clear for final signature in October next year, enabling him to claim credit ahead of the US presidential elections in November. There is scepticism among European officials whether an April deadline is practicable, however. One said that there was a reluctance to appear to be "dragged along by the Americans".

IN BRIEF

Swedish deputy PM to be investigated

Stockholm — Sweden's public prosecutor decided yesterday to investigate Mona Sahlin's admitted misuse of an official credit card, but political support for the Deputy Prime Minister grew with a strong endorsement from the Prime Minister, Ingvar Carlsson. "I believe that Mona Sahlin is an unusual and talented politician; she is knowledgeable, capable, strong and courageous," he said. Other ministers said they would not fill the void left by her decision announced on Tuesday night to postpone her bid for the Social Democratic Party's leadership after Mr Carlsson stepped down as planned next March.

Commonwealth states attacked over rights
London — In a scathing report ahead of next month's Commonwealth summit, an influential pressure group said yesterday that many of the Commonwealth's 51 member states lacked the political will to respect human rights. The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) said many governments were paying little attention to the declaration of support for law and order and democracy that they endorsed in Harare in 1991.

Wolf wins retrial

Bonn — Markus Wolf, the East German spy master, scored a legal victory yesterday when Germany's top appeals court overturned his six-year sentence on a 1993 treason conviction and ordered a retrial. The new trial will have to determine whether Wolf sneaked through the Iron Curtain to steal secrets; or limited himself to having his thousands of "moles" in the West do the work. AP

'No proof of Claes's guilt'

Brussels — A report by a special Belgian parliamentary commission released yesterday said there was no firm proof of Willy Claes's guilt in a corruption scandal that threatens his career as Nato Secretary-General. Mr Claes has been accused of corruption when he was economics minister in 1988-89. The report will form the basis for a vote by members of parliament today on whether to send Mr Claes to court.

North Korea blamed for breaking truce

Seoul — The United Nations Command backed South Korea yesterday, blaming North Korea for violating a truce agreement by sending out armed infiltrators, one of whom was shot dead by South Korean troops. A second North Korean infiltrator who survived Tuesday's shooting slipped back across the border, Seoul's Defence Ministry said yesterday.

Soldier risks trial over UN uniform

Frankfurt — The US Army said it has charged a 22-year-old medic with disobeying an order for refusing to wear the UN blue beret and patch. His commanding general will decide whether Michael New will face court-martial. Mr New was to have been deployed to Macedonia for peace-keeping duty.

Cali phone boss accused of drug links
Bogota — The head of Cali's phone company, Emcali, was in police custody yesterday on suspicion he tapped phones for drug traffickers. Adolfo Gallon turned himself in Tuesday to police in Cali, home to the world's largest drug syndicate. Police arrested the carter's alleged communications chief, Gilberto Mora, on suspicion he bugged top officials' phones for the cartel.



Charm offensive: OJ Simpson (right) preparing to make a putt during the first round of golf he has played since his acquittal. During his round, he stopped to talk to several people and posed for pictures 'with the ladies'. Photograph: AP

international

OJ gets back in golfing swing

Panama City Beach, Florida (AP) — OJ Simpson has made his first public foray since his murder acquittal, playing golf, posing for pictures and signing autographs.

Joking that he had not practised in 17 months — the period of his arrest and trial before being acquitted of murdering his ex-wife Nicole Brown and a friend, Ronald Goldman — Mr Simpson played at the Homestead Golf Club on Thursday, watched by his girlfriend Paula Barbieri. "He played pretty good," said Joe Inman — a grounds supervisor, who partnered him during a 10-over par round of 82.

While he played, Mr Simpson reportedly missed his daughter Sydney's 10th birthday. She was back home in California, the *New York Post* reported.

Mr Barbieri, whose family lives in the area, watched from a golf cart and left a short time later. Mr Simpson did his best to charm the public. "He took the time and stopped more than once with people on the course," said Mr Inman. "I

guess word got around. They were coming out of their houses. He took pictures with some of the ladies."

Mr Simpson's lawyers claimed he was chipping golf balls in his darkened mansion while the murders took place — an alibi that was ridiculed by prosecutors.

Extracts from the private diary of Ms Brown Simpson, telling of a marriage destroyed by abuse and hatred, were published this week by the *National Enquirer*, a weekly tabloid newspaper. Further extracts are promised next week. According to the report, Ms Simpson told her wife to get an abortion when she was two months pregnant with their son Justin and called her "a fat pig" and a "slob".

National Enquirer executive editor Steve Coz said the diary was supplied to the tabloid by "someone who was very concerned about spousal abuse". He said the diary had been authenticated by Ms Brown Simpson's father, Lou Brown, as being written by his daughter.



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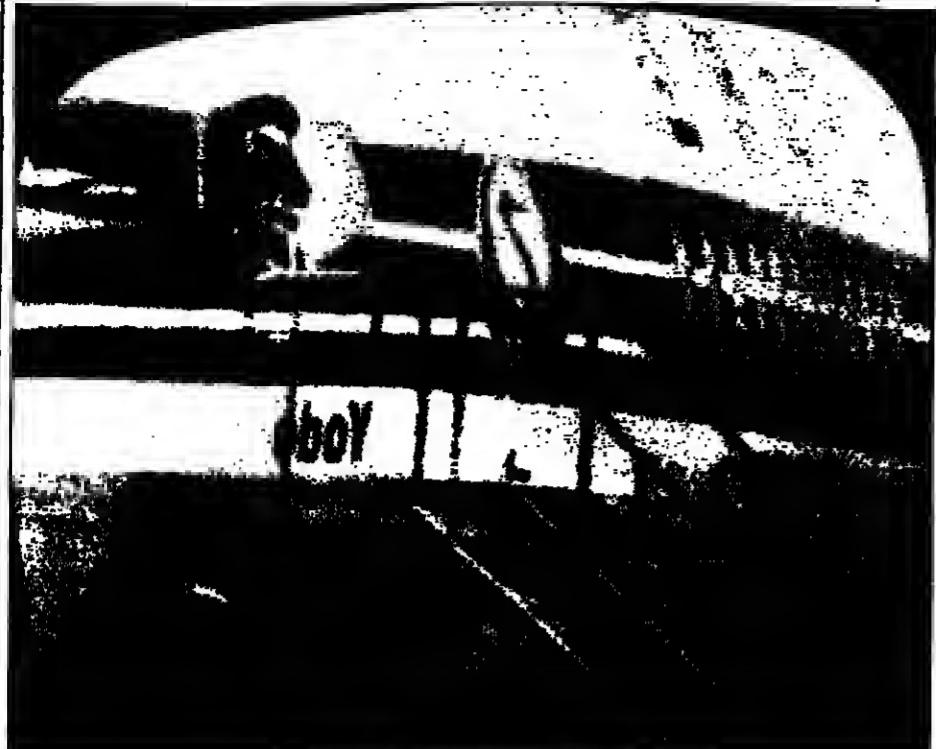
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international

Japanese Red Army terrorists dream of going home



Flashback to 1970: The gang finally reached North Korea, which greeted them as heroes but the welcome is wearing thin and now there is a whiff of nostalgia in the air

Tokyo — "I hope they will be able to visit me in Japan," says Tomoko Konishi. "They're lovely girls, you know. Very nice, decent, normal Japanese girls." The photograph bears her out: in it, Mrs Konishi, 74, stands stiffly with her two granddaughters — pretty, rather earnest-looking teenagers who stare unsmilingly into the camera. But, whatever their grumpy thinks, Ritsuko and Yumi Konishi are not your average Japanese schoolgirls. The family reunion she is planning is reopening a 25-year-old controversy about one of Japan's most notorious crimes.

At the centre of the case is Takahiro Konishi, 51, son of Tomoko and father of the two girls. In March 1970, as leader of the Red Army Faction, he led one of the most sensational hijackings in history. Nine student revolutionaries, armed with guns and swords, seized a Japan Airlines jet carrying 138 people. After landing in South Korea, they swapped the passengers and crew for a single hostage: the Japanese deputy minister of transport, who had

volunteered to take their place.

From Seoul they flew to Pyongyang, where they were welcomed by North Korea as heroes and political refugees. The Japanese demanded their repatriation but, lacking diplomatic relations with Pyongyang, they were ignored.

Other Red Army members in Japan were imprisoned for planning the crime but from North Korea almost no news was heard. Then came a remarkable disclosure: three years ago, in an interview with a Japanese newspaper, the late dictator, Kim Il Sung, referred to the hijackers in unflattering terms: "They cannot truly be called revolutionaries, because they live comfortably with their wives and children." The hijackers, it turned out, had Japanese wives, Red Army sympathisers who had smuggled themselves into North Korea via Eastern Europe.

Supporters' groups began visiting Mr Konishi and his

comrades and uncovered new surprises: for years, Pyongyang supported them, but recently, as it made twitchy attempts to attract Western aid, its welcome for the terrorists appears to have cooled. In 1990, the government withdrew financial support. The erstwhile student terrorists now run their own travel agency and import-export business, trading with former Communist states.

But North Korea's economy is in crisis after summer floods and wretched harvests; there are predictions of famine. Since the death of Kim last year, few observers know who commands power. Understandably, all but one of the hijackers now wish to return to Japan.

The wives are wanted for passport violations; the best that the hijackers themselves can look forward to is long prison sentences. But among them they have fathered 18 children, the eldest Mr Konishi's daughter Ritsuko, 18.

hijackers' children will eventually return to Japan.

What awaits them when they do? Quite apart from the inevitable suspicion that they are spies, Japanese society is notoriously intolerant of former exiles. Even children who have grown up in Europe or America often face bullying and alienation when they return to Japan.

There is a tendency, too, to project the sins of the fathers on to succeeding generations. The children of another public enemy — Shoko Asahara, guru of the Aum Shinri Kyo sect, suspected of the sarin-gas attack on the Tokyo subway in March — are facing this problem in their home town, where suspicious parents are resisting attempts to enroll them in the local school.

As a family, the Konishis can live together only in North Korea. "Unless they can all come back together, it cannot be a homecoming in the real sense," says Mrs Konishi. "My granddaughters are innocent, but I expect a lot of difficulties ahead."

Honeymoon over in US trade talks with China

TERESA POOLE
Peking

Fourteen months ago, the US Secretary of Commerce, Ron Brown, bounded on to the stage in Peking waving a list of nearly \$6bn (£4bn) of new deals for American companies, trumpeting a new era of "commercial diplomacy" and putting himself on the back for China's decision to resume the bilateral human rights dialogue.

That was then. Yesterday it was a more sober Mr Brown who admitted that Sino-US official contacts "cannot be expected to produce instant results". There were no photo-opportunity contract signings, perhaps because it has emerged this week that more than \$35bn of last year's "deals" have yet to be consummated. There was no indication that China had offered Mr Brown any firm commitments to open its markets, or to adhere to this year's

commitment to making it work is often easy to lose amid the stories about week-to-week problems," Mr Brown told the American Chamber of Commerce in Peking.

In his meeting with President Jiang yesterday, Mr Brown delivered a message which, he said, "clearly indicates President Clinton's view of the importance of the relationship". Talking to Associated Press after the meeting, Mr Brown was upbeat: "I came at a time when if there was continued extension of tension in our relationship the Chinese would have had the opportunity to communicate it to me, and they didn't."

Despite Mr Brown's optimism, most of the traditional points of friction will still be on the table next week when the two presidents meet. Lee Sands, the assistant trade representative, warned earlier this month that the US expected its trade deficit with China to reach \$38bn this year, and as much as \$50bn next year. Mr Brown refused to make his own forecast, but admitted: "The trade deficit is too high."

Mr Brown said he was lobbying hard during this visit for up to \$20bn of contracts for which American firms were bidding against international competition. But the update on last year's deals was less than overwhelming. "We too are frustrated by the lack of progress.... Not a single major private power project has come to fruition in China. Not one."

Apart from obstructive Chinese bureaucracy, the main stumbling block has been financing and the issue of whether Peking will guarantee project debt raised by the provinces. Mr Brown said he had been assured by Chinese officials that the US projects "are moving through the process".

Peking, for its part, accuses the US of blocking its application to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Entry to the WTO has become the most powerful tool for the US to force open China's market, and yesterday Mr Brown repeated that China's entry must be "on commercial terms".

In a positive sign for Peking, he added: "It is hard to conceive of a WTO in 1996 that does not include China."



Ron Brown: Frustrated by 'lack of progress' in China

anti-piracy pact. There was no sign of the US trade deficit with China levelling off. Nor has the supposed human rights dialogue produced any tangible results over the past year.

Such are the realities for a US official on his or her second visit to China. But Mr Brown is the highest-level American official to come to Peking since June, when the Taiwanese President, Lee Teng-hui, visited the US, scuppering Sino-US relations. So the Secretary of Commerce was anxious yesterday to set a constructive tone for next Friday's meeting in New York between President Bill Clinton and his Chinese counterpart, Jiang Zemin. "The centrality of this relationship and our absolute

Deng's would-be heir shows military muscle

Peking (Reuters) — The Chinese Communist Party chief Jiang Zemin was shown on television yesterday presiding over dramatic naval exercises — including rocket firings and marine landings — with his new military command huddled around him.

The state broadcast appeared to be designed to show Mr Jiang commanding absolute support in the People's Liberation Army, seen as crucial to his bid to succeed Deng Xiaoping, now 91, as China's leader. It also sent a clear message to Taiwan, quoting soldiers as vowing, under Mr Jiang, to "safeguard the reunification of the motherland" — that is, to return the Nationalist-ruled

island to mainland control.

Mr Jiang's display of military clout came less than a week before his 24 October summit with President Bill Clinton and his address to the United Nations the same day. The exercise could touch off new criticism from China's neighbours, who fear the military ambitions of an economically resurgent and well-armed Asian superpower.

"Comrades, how bitterly you struggle!" Mr Jiang shouted through loudspeakers to sailors.

"Serve the people!" the crew responded in unison to Mr Jiang, who commands the armed forces as chairman of the Communist Party's Central Military Commission.

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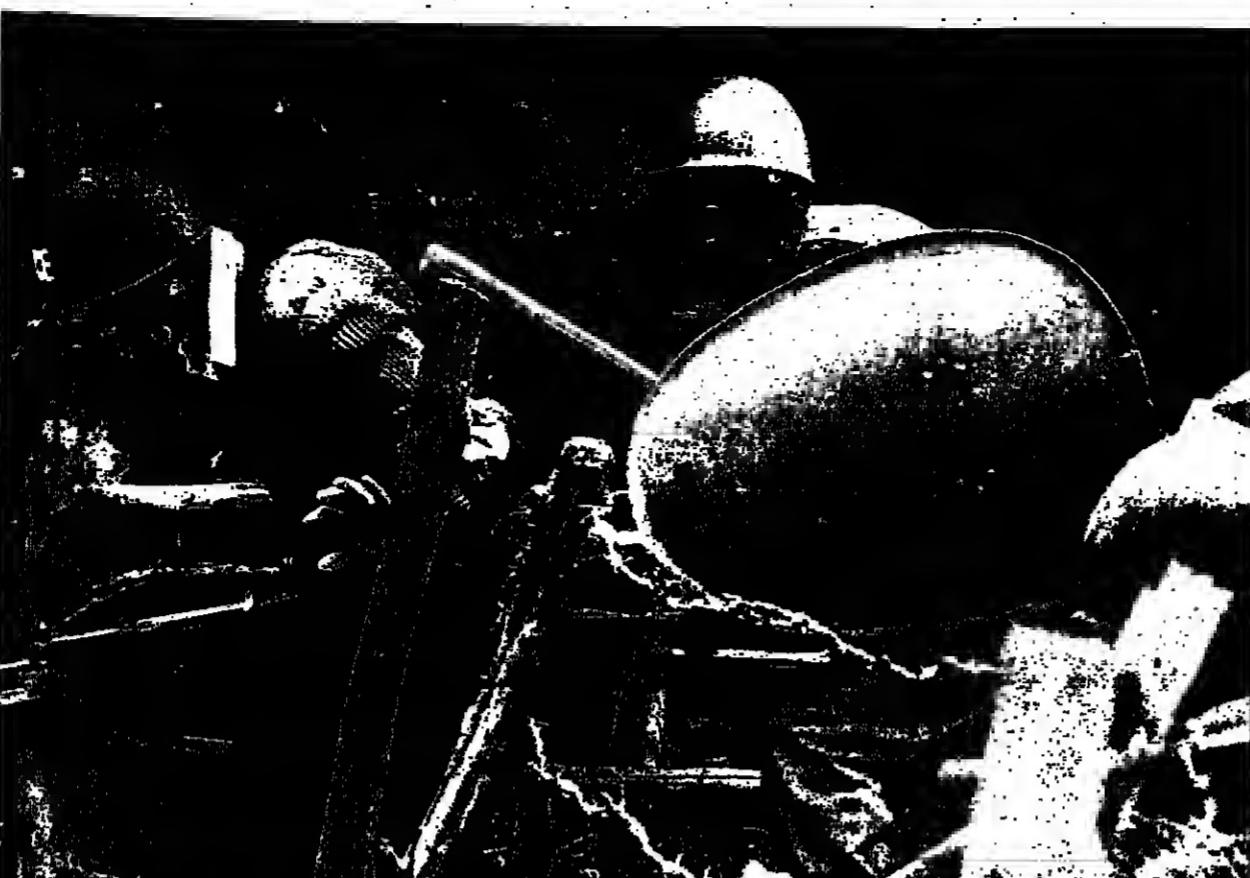
Sentenced to death by disease

Nairobi (Reuters) — An average of three prisoners die each day in Kenya's congested prisons, the Home Affairs Minister, Francis Lotodo, has told parliament. The main causes of death were Aids-related ailments, malaria, meningitis and diarrhoeal diseases.

From January to the end of September, said Mr Lotodo, 819 inmates died. Of these, 291 were on remand. He added that lack of money meant his ministry could do nothing to improve prison conditions.

A High Court judge has said that "jailing anyone is like sending them to a death chamber". And the Attorney-General, Amos Wako, last week urged magistrates and judges not to send law-breakers to jail for petty offences. Last week President Daniel arap Moi set free 10,896 prisoners, mostly petty offenders, who had less than six months of their sentences left to serve.

Government figures show that in July, Kenya's 78 prisons, with a designed capacity of 21,000, held 37,066 inmates.



Watching brief: Soldiers and police patrol Nairobi's Kibera slums where two people have been shot and wounded in fierce ethnic fighting, sparked by the death of a Nubian man whose body was found on Sunday. Photograph: AP



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Italy's fake invalids slow down the mail

In one village, 500 people out of 1,500 were registered disabled. Andrew Gumbel reports on the 'invalidipoli' scandal

Rome — We always knew the Italian postal system was awful, but now we know why. Thanks to the revelations of a Roman investigating magistrate, we learn that what ought to be a thriving modern communications industry is being run by an army of invalids.

Almost 17,000 invalids to be exact, all of them with medical certificates to prove how handicapped they are. No wonder nothing works properly. Far from railing against what is arguably the worst public service in Europe, our hearts ought to be filled with compassion.

That little young woman scowling at her newspaper instead of attending to the long line of customers in front of her may not look unwell, but she has in fact got Parkinson's disease. Don't be hard on the man who seductively orders you to pull all

the staples out of your padded envelope before he will accept it for posting; he has a painful curvature of the spine.

And go easy on the postmen who take a week to carry letters across town, or several months to send them out of the country. Many should be in wheelchairs, and they carry out their task only out of a strong sense of civic duty.

That's the official version of events.

The investigating magistrate,

Giorgio Castellucci, has

his doubts, particularly since he

discovered that one "handicapped" postal worker plays

football on his afternoons off,

that another has a second job as a gym teacher and that a third is an aspiring fashion model whose severe mobility problem disappears on the catwalk.

Welcome to *invalidipoli*, the

latest scandal to erupt in this

scandal-prone country. It has

never been a secret that fake

invalidity certificates were a dime

a dozen in Italy — about one in

two is false — but never before

has anything this systematic

been uncovered.

According to Mr Castellucci,

the post office scam costs the

state billions of lire in fraudu-

lent invalidity benefits, as well

as doing a disservice to the gen-

uinely disabled, who are being

squeezed out of badly needed

jobs.

He has indicted 90 people,

including doctors, health offi-

cials and post office managers,

as well as the fake invalids

themselves. He expects the

final number of people sent for

trial to exceed 2,500.

The scam dates back to the

late 1980s, when the Post and

Telecommunications Ministry

was in the hands of the small,

now defunct, Social Democratic

party. According to the prosecu-

tion, the then post office

minister, Carlo Vizzini, and his

friends, handed out jobs to the

sons and daughters of influen-

tial associates like sandwiches

at a party, using a quota on

employment of the disabled as

a way of sneaking them through

the back door.

Normally, disabled people

would be selected by public sec-

tor competition, but in much of

the country, particularly the

Rome area, Naples and Sicily,

the fake invalids were hired

directly.

In one Sicilian village,

Militello Rosmarino, where the

Social Democrats were keen to

gather votes, about 500 of the

1,500-strong population were at

one point registered as dis-

abled. Many were inscribed

illegally on the local electoral

roll — registered as living at the

the mayor's house — even though they lived and worked in post offices in other parts of Sicily.

Whole families lived off the salaries and pensions from the scam, and returned the favour by propping up the Social Democrats' small share of the Italian vote.

Militello Rosmarino was cleaned up three years ago, following an investigation by the Catholic magazine *Famiglia Cristiana*, a publication memorably denounced as "pornographic" by the head of the local health authority, who is now in jail. The disabled population has since fallen to fewer than 20.

The rest of Italy is only now waking up to the scale of the scandal. Since Mr Castellucci launched his investigation a few weeks ago, one post office building in Rome which contains personnel records has mysteriously caught fire, while documents on disability registration at a major public health centre in the capital have vanished into thin air. The number of people turning up at public offices to claim disability benefit has suddenly dropped by several thousand.

The post office scandal gives and insight into what happens when an essential public service is used for years as a pork-barrel for nepotism. The results have been catastrophic. The post arrives hopelessly late or not at all. Service is surly and inefficient. Bloated staffing levels have blown a huge hole in the already debt-ridden national finances.

The new mayor of Militello Rosmarino, Nuccio Carrara, estimates that 55,000 of the post office's 200,000-odd salaried positions need to be cut. He believes the judiciary may have been deliberately tipped off about the invalidity scandal by post office managers, keen to axe jobs without offending the powerful public sector unions.

The most serious losers, whatever happens, will be the country's real disabled, who have always suffered in silence in a country which considers them a source of shame and mostly keeps them hidden behind closed doors.

About 10,000 are looking for work in Rome alone. Every six months the state assigns 600 of them to subsidised private sector jobs, but 90 per cent are immediately rejected. In the last year, the state administration has taken on only 35 genuinely disabled people — compared with the thousands registered as fit as fiddles.

British meeting with Nigerians provokes anger

MICHAEL SHERIDAN
Diplomatic Editor

The British government is coming under pressure to take a tougher stand against the Nigerian military regime after a quiet and apparently cordial series of meetings between Nigerian emissaries and British officials this week.

Britain is trying to stave off demands for sanctions against Nigeria at next month's Commonwealth summit, fearing British commercial interests could be damaged. But other Commonwealth governments are likely to heed the advice of a recent fact-finding mission, which concluded that only sanctions could help to restore democracy in West Africa's largest country.

The mission recommended a study of a possible oil embargo and measures to freeze the personal bank accounts and assets of members of the regime. It warned that Nigeria could dissolve into civil strife if the army held on to power.

There has been fresh opposition criticism of British policy after visits to London by the Nigerian Finance Minister, Anthony Ani, and Chief Ernest Shonkan, a personal representative of the Nigerian military leader, General Sani Abacha. The two men, who were on their way home from talks in Washington with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank on Nigeria's debt, spoke at meetings organised by the Nigerian-British Chamber of Commerce, intended to boost investment in the country.

General Abacha has reacted to criticism from abroad by announcing a three-year timetable for the restoration of civilian rule, and by exercising clemency towards 40 people accused of plotting a coup.



General Abacha: threat of Commonwealth sanctions

of sanctions and criticised the conduct of quiet diplomacy towards the regime. In a Commons motion he said there should be a phased, effective approach to sanctions, linked to a timetable for a return to civilian rule. "The British government should for once lead the world and call for a comprehensive package of measures ... that will really hurt this brutal regime," he said.

General Abacha has reacted to criticism from abroad by announcing a three-year timetable for the restoration of civilian rule, and by exercising clemency towards 40 people accused of plotting a coup.

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The legacy of Fred West

It's not often that a civil servant makes someone's fortune. But author Geoffrey Wansell is probably going to become a very wealthy man, thanks to the efforts of the Official Solicitor, Peter Harris. Mr Harris has brokered the sale to publishers Hodder Headline of Frederick West's own jail autobiography and of 13 volumes of police transcripts of interviews with West, all for use in Mr Wansell's account of the West case. Whatever Mr Wansell's many talents, the presence of this material alone ensures that his book will be the clear leader in a packed post-trial field. He and his publishers must be feeling very pleased with themselves.

But should the rest of us share this warm glow? That certainly isn't our first reaction. In the middle of a trial that has been characterised by a constant flow of questions to witnesses about the sale of their stories to newspapers and others, this deal doesn't feel right. Did it have to happen now? And is it really the task of someone employed by the public to anoint authors with such remunerative blessings?

Mr Harris's office argues that he is just doing what the courts appointed him to do. As Official Solicitor, he represents (on our behalf) those who cannot represent themselves — particularly minors. The younger members of

the West family needed someone to act for them. To get the best possible deal for their father's estate (which includes his papers and the transcripts), Mr Harris is fulfilling this "best friend" role.

Such explanations fail to reassure. In the first place the sale itself is suspect. We must not pre-judge the outcome of the Rosemary West trial, but can we really countenance the possibility that the murder of several young women and girls should eventually benefit the estate of their killer, while the victims' families may be left with nothing? If criminals are not allowed to benefit from their crimes, then logically neither should their families.

If the legal answer to the above question is yes, the family must inherit, then there is something wrong with the law. At any event it was surely a mistake for the sale to be pushed through while the evidence is still being heard in court. Quite apart from the unseemliness of hawking the West transcripts before any culpability is determined — thus bracketing together the dispensation of justice and the sale of stories — there was no need to hold the auction now. If the timing was aimed at maximising the returns, then those involved should be ashamed of themselves.

A shameful lack of honour

Evnts over the past few days have provided powerful evidence that Michael Howard has indeed intervened regularly in the running of the prison service. Derek Lewis, during more than three years as Director-General of the Prison Service, was clearly fed up with such interference. That much is apparent from the writ against Mr Howard, which he issued yesterday. Mr Lewis portrays the Home Secretary breaking down his neck every day, obstructing staff appointments, interfering in industrial disputes with the prison officers' association, even pressuring him to suspend John Marriott, the former Governor of Parkhurst prison after three dangerous "lifers" escaped.

Mr Lewis is not the first person to think that he could do better if only a superior would cease pestering. His protestations are also self-serving. (Like Mr Howard, he tends to blame everyone but himself.) And be may not be wholly reliable on the particulars. After all, he seems to have changed his story. In January, Mr Lewis told a Commons committee of MPs that Mr Howard had not intervened in the operational matters that led to Mr Marriott's removal.

Nevertheless, Mr Lewis's general case that his old boss is a busybody looks compelling. And who could blame Mr Howard for being so obsessive? He is the Home Secretary. We would be worried if he did not take a conscientious interest in those behind bars.

In normal circumstances, we would not expect Mr Howard to resign for being too involved in the running of Britain's prisons. Nor would we expect him to step down over the Parkhurst jail-break or the other high-profile escapes under his watch. They were serious. Sir John Leamont's report on Monday described a prison system with security flaws that require urgent action, but it did not demand Mr Howard's head.

ANOTHER VIEW David Trimble

The trap in Sir Patrick's path

From the outset of the peace process, the Downing Street Declaration laid down that parties such as Sinn Fein had to establish a commitment to peaceful methods before talks. The Irish Prime Minister, Dick Spring, gave the reason in June when he said there was little point attempting to bring people into political dialogue if they could return to bombs and bullets if it didn't work. Giving up bombs and bullets before talks sends a clear sign that Sinn Fein is turning its back on terrorism.

Unfortunately this requirement, which was originally agreed by the British and Irish governments and underwritten by the US government, is in danger of being eroded in two ways. The first is through the "twin-track" concept: that parallel talks on decommissioning there should be a beginning to all-party talks on preliminary matters. The obvious danger here is that Sinn Fein will obstruct and slow down discussion in the first track while blurring the distinction between preliminary and substantive matters in the second track so as to pitch all parties into full talks while still possessing its guns and using them as a lever in the talks.

Sir Patrick Mayhew may have disclosed the second way the requirement to give up weapons may be in jeopardy at his press conference in Belfast on Tuesday. He said, "a commission might find some other means by which the necessary confidence can be generated". I suspect that elements in the Irish and US governments

are planning that an international commission (without the word disarmament or decommissioning in the title) will be set in progress, that it will conduct some investigations and come back and report that it is satisfied with Sinn Fein's commitment to peace, and urge the commencement of talks on that basis. And then the British government will be pressurised into accepting such a report as a substitute for decommissioning. Sir Patrick's language may be walking him and us into the very trap that Dick Spring said a year ago would be intolerable.

Instead of allowing himself to be moved by these elements within the Irish and US governments, Sir Patrick should insist that the Irish government sticks to the Downing Street Declaration. It should remind the White House that it gave Sinn Fein permission at Easter to raise money in the US in the expectation that Sinn Fein would deliver on arms. Rather than tamely accepting Sinn Fein's reasoning on that understanding, the White House ought to be persuading it to accept realities.

Many years ago Sinn Fein leader declared that the organisation would take power with an Armalite in one hand and a ballot paper in the other. What its members must accept is that no one will deal with them until they throw away the Armalite and trust exclusively to the ballot paper.

The writer is the leader of the Ulster Unionist Party.



HEATH

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Million Man March: Farrakhan's words offer renewal

From Ms Linda Bellos

Sir: The Independent is to be congratulated for printing excerpts from Louis Farrakhan's speech (16 October) on Monday at the Million Man March. From my reading of what he said, there was no hint of race hatred or antisemitism.

I have heard Farrakhan's utterances in the past about the Jewish faith and the Jewish community in America, and they are unacceptable and offensive. It is also the case that he has distanced himself from these earlier views. He still has far to go to allay the legitimate anxieties of Jewish people, but at least he has offered to engage in dialogue.

What has been distressing about the coverage of the Nation of Islam is the way that both its leader and his message have been distorted. To assert that America is a racist society is not itself racist; it is instead a statement of fact — if that is, one is black.

It took particular boldness to call for spiritual renewal and for a Million Man March. Is it such a bad thing that Farrakhan achieved this? Would it be preferable for the message of renewal to be delayed

until the messenger is acceptable to those who are not black?

I, for one, was particularly impressed by the non-sectarian call by Farrakhan for black men to join organisations, to register to vote, and to join religious groups, whether Christian, Jewish or Muslim. Far from separating, this is about participating and, as such, it should be applauded or at least respected.

Yours sincerely,
LINDA BELLOS
London, N4
18 October

The writer is treasurer of the Africa Reparations Movement (UK).

From Mr Dick Baptiste

Sir: According to John Carlin and yours (16 October), the Million Man March that took place in Washington DC on Monday was a spectacle that would make "Martin Luther King weep if he were alive today", and a "sideshow", compared to the

merits of, say, a black president.

It's true that some of Louis Farrakhan's more extreme political views are thoroughly reactionary and deserving of criticism, but this does not take away the

reality of the worsening situation of the African-American community.

Mr Carlin acknowledges the poverty and discrimination of the black community, but it seems that any action that does not invoke the "integration" philosophy of Dr King can only be a hindrance to the emancipation of black American people.

Black nationalism is no answer to the institutionalised racism in America, but it is an attempt to invigorate black people with pride in themselves and, more importantly, it recognises the role played by central government in fostering and promoting racism.

With organisations like the Nation of Islam or an OJ Simpson trial, the problems of black America will not go away; neither will they bear any fruit in a future Powell administration.

Yours sincerely,
DICK BAPTISTE
Mitscham, Surrey
17 October

From Mr William Searns

Sir: John Carlin states that "Thirty-two years on, segregation has gone, blacks occupy positions of office around the land; a black

man could be elected president of the United States next year."

But as the OJ Simpson verdict demonstrates, Martin Luther King's hope for "judgement not by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character" has proven an unrealised dream for the majority of black America.

In March 1995, I happened upon a bar in Alabama that still bore the legend, "No coloured".

The occupants said nothing wrong with such a sign and, when questioned, proceeded to air their views on racial issues.

Such racial hatred, as demonstrated by the example of Detective Mark Fuhrman, has made much of black America feel the need to voice its disquiet. If the catalyst for such a display of solidarity has to be the anti-Semitic Farrakhan, then that is perhaps a fair price to pay to demonstrate how many American blacks feel that King's 1963 Civil Rights march on Washington has yet, away from the legislated confines of Capitol Hill, to fully permeate to American society as a whole.

Yours sincerely,
WILLIAM SEARNS
Edinburgh

Anglican employment

From The Rev Roger W. Reed

Sir: Strange and sad irony that you should offer a pulpit to the Rev Kit Chalcraft (Another View, 18 October) on the day that you publish the obituary of his illustrious predecessor at Hilborough.

My colleague seems as confused in his thinking as he is in his relationships. His position today owes nothing to a "two-tier" structure of appointments. Neither benefited incumbents nor priests-in-charge do work for money, since we are neither employed nor paid, although in various ways we are privileged to be related to the secular system, for instance in the matter of national health insurance.

An Anglican minister receives a stipend, defined as an allowance to enable him to live neither in wealth nor poverty, in order that his life — not an eight-hour shift — may be devoted to ministry. He or she must take responsibility before God for what he chooses to do with the 24 hours that each day brings, subject to the commitment made at Ordination and at institution or licensing.

Kit Chalcraft complains of "a remote, centralised authority pontificating from afar" — forgetting that the priest is the local and personal representative and bearer of that authority for the pastoring and nurture of God's people. By his own action, Mr Chalcraft has rendered himself incapable of functioning as an Anglican priest in the vital matter of the sacrament of marriage. A beneficed appointment would not have protected him from his present position.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER REED
Priest-in-Charge
Blundworth and Chalton
with Idsworth
Horndean,
Hampshire
18 October

Wot an eye for English dialect

From Mr Dennis Freeborn

Sir: Meridel Holland's "should of" (Letters, 18 October) is a misspelling of "should've", the normal reduced spoken form of "should have" that everyone uses. "Should of" is the kind of written form called "eye-dialect" that novelists use to indicate a lower class character, like "wot" and "me moother" for "what" and "my mother". So it is inadmissible as evidence for a "new illiteracy".

Dr Holland's letter is patronising in its reference to "time-bombed and charming dialect usage". Non-standard dialect forms of English are neither more nor less "charming" than standard English. Objectively, they simply differ in their choice of a relatively small number of grammatical forms.

"Might've went" (Meridel Holland's second example) is dialectal. By what criterion is it to be judged a "creeping bane" rather than "charming", or even "exquisite", like "who telled thee it were one?", quoted in Ruth Clarke's letter (17 October)? Yours faithfully,
DENNIS FREEBORN
York
18 October

From Mr John Jacobs

Sir: John Major's deeply personal and sincere account of how he knows all too well what it feels like when the money runs out on a Thursday moved me to tears, as did his promise that he would ensure that the Conservative Party always looked after the sick and vulnerable ("Major finds clear blue water", 14 October).

They were tears of rage that he could have the effrontery to say this in a year when he has presided over a government that, wisely and kindly:

1. has introduced the new incapacity Benefit, the avowed aim of which is to cut benefits to the long-term sick and disabled;

2. is about to bring in the Jobseeker's Allowance, which will cut unemployment benefit from 12 months to six months and remove the benefit altogether from thousands of claimants; and

3. has abolished mortgage interest relief for the first nine months of unemployment or sickness for all new recipients of income support.

And that's just this year!

No doubt all those driven deeper into poverty by these measures will take great comfort from the fact that their capital

gains and inheritances will not be taxed as much in future.

Yours sincerely,

JON JACOBS
Senior Lecturer in
Social Policy
School of Cultural and
Community Studies
University of Sussex
Falmer, Brighton
14 October

From Ms Laura Martin-Clark

Sir: I wonder if anyone else has picked up on what seemed a most confused part of John Major's speech at the Tory conference. I refer to his attack on George Orwell as a "public-school socialist" and a name-changer.

This struck me as bizarre in that Mr Major has previously quoted George Orwell with approval. Did he not make his own some lines from the introduction to the *Lion and the Unicorn* about spinners cycling to church through the early morning mist?

Mr Major appears to believe that, far from having originated and exposed the concept of "double-think", Orwell was a proponent of it. That he should attempt to associate Tony Blair with the same fault, simply by virtue of a coincidence in their surnames [Orwell's real name

was Eric Blair] puts the cap on a glorious example of his own particular strain of "muddle-think".

Perhaps he should see Gillian Shephard after school for some extra homework on the writings of George Orwell, about whom he appears to hold contradictory views?

Yours sincerely,
LAURA MARTIN-CLARK
Crawley, West Sussex
13 October

From Mr John Mallen

Sir: John Major, on the basis of one speech to the party conference, becomes "authentic, honourable and decent" (leading article, 15 October)? What has happened to the government record of the past 16 years? Are we now to forget the broken promises, the sleaze, the vast increase in poverty, the lining of the pockets of Tory supporters, the sheer greed, the appeal to naked selfishness and the attacks on the poorest sections of our society?

Actions speak infinitely louder than words. The true Major came out when he promised to abolish capital gains tax, inheritance tax and to increase spending on assisted places.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN MALLEN
Dereham, Norfolk
15 October

From Mr Andrew Smith

Sir: Chris Blackhurst's report concerning local authority capital receipts (16 October) intimates that the £6bn in frozen local authority capital receipts no longer exists and there is only £2bn available. However, the most recent Department of Environment statistics show £6.041bn held by local authorities in provision for credit liabilities set aside. In addition, there is £2bn of usable receipts that is available for spending now.

Labour's bousing spokesman, Nick Raynsford MP, has spoken to a large number of local authorities this year on this matter, confirming that substantial capital receipts are available and that

many councils are eager to put them to good effect. These are the frozen capital receipts to which Labour's policy refers.

The present Government prohibits local authorities from spending this money on working capital projects. Labour has pledged that these funds would be released in a phased manner, enabling the construction of new social housing to proceed, tackling the acute housing crisis brought about by the Conservatives' policy failure.

Yours sincerely,
ANDREW SMITH
MP for Oxford East (Lab)
House of Commons
London, SW1
17 October

The writer is Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

Yours faithfully,
FELICITY ARBUCKHON
London, E9
15 October

من العمال

INDEPENDENT • Thursday 19 October 1995

BUSINESS NEWS DESK: tel 0171-293 2548 fax 0171-293 2098

MARKET SUMMARY									
STOCK MARKETS									
FTSE 100					Dow Jones*				
3610	3579	3530	3490	3450	4821	4780	4740	4700	4660
3610	3579	3530	3490	3450	4821	4780	4740	4700	4660
T F M I W	T F M I W	T F M I W	T F M I W	T F M I W	T F M I W	T F M I W	T F M I W	T F M I W	T F M I W
Index	Clos.	Day's change	Change(%)	12 Mth High	12 Mth Low	Today's			
FTSE 100	3593.0	+30.8	+0.9	3593.0	2943.4	4.0			
FTSE 250	3941.3	+4.4	+0.1	3951.3	3300.9	3.5			
FTSE 350	1785.3	+12.3	+0.7	1785.3	1477.0	3.8			
FT Small Cap	1665.9	+3.4	+0.1	1693.1	1678.6	3.3			
FT All-Shares	1762.8	+11.5	+0.7	1767.6	1465.2	3.8			
New York	4762.9	-13.0	-0.3	4801.8	3674.8	2.4			
Tokyo	17896.0	-20.6	-0.1	19892.4	14465.4	0.8			
Hong Kong	9973.2	-59.2	-0.6	10032.9	6967.9	3.2			
Frankfurt	2194.8	-4.2	-0.3	2317.7	1911.0	2.0			
Paris	1770.7	-8.1	-0.5	2017.3	1721.8	3.8			
Milan	9388.0	+160.0	+1.7	10911.0	9238.0	2.1			
*New Jones at 1500 hours. Dow Jones graph at 1300 hours									
MAIN PRICE CHANGES									
FTSE 350 companies (excluding investment trusts)									
Codes									
Falls					Rises				
Royal Ins Hdg	411.5	26.5	6.9	Trafalgar House	21	2.5	10.6		
Smith (Wm)	377	21	5.9	Body Shop Int	135	8	4.3		
Entropic Asr	705	30	4.4	London Mar Offd	54	2	3.6		
Northern Elec	852	36	4.4	Highland Dist	365	12	3.2		
Commercial Union	624	26	4.4	Howden Group	83.5	2.5	2.9		
INTEREST RATES									
Short Sterling* & 34%					UK medium gilt				
6.85	6.80	6.75	6.70	6.65	7.30	7.25	7.20	7.15	7.10
6.80	6.75	6.70	6.65	6.60	7.25	7.20	7.15	7.10	7.05
6.75	6.70	6.65	6.60	6.55	7.20	7.15	7.10	7.05	7.00
6.70	6.65	6.60	6.55	6.50	7.15	7.10	7.05	7.00	6.95
6.65	6.60	6.55	6.50	6.45	7.10	7.05	7.00	6.95	6.90
6.60	6.55	6.50	6.45	6.40	7.05	7.00	6.95	6.90	6.85
6.55	6.50	6.45	6.40	6.35	7.00	6.95	6.90	6.85	6.80
6.50	6.45	6.40	6.35	6.30	6.95	6.90	6.85	6.80	6.75
6.45	6.40	6.35	6.30	6.25	6.90	6.85	6.80	6.75	6.70
6.40	6.35	6.30	6.25	6.20	6.85	6.80	6.75	6.70	6.65
6.35	6.30	6.25	6.20	6.15	6.80	6.75	6.70	6.65	6.60
6.30	6.25	6.20	6.15	6.10	6.75	6.70	6.65	6.60	6.55
6.25	6.20	6.15	6.10	6.05	6.70	6.65	6.60	6.55	6.50
6.20	6.15	6.10	6.05	6.00	6.65	6.60	6.55	6.50	6.45
6.15	6.10	6.05	6.00	5.95	6.60	6.55	6.50	6.45	6.40
6.10	6.05	6.00	5.95	5.90	6.55	6.50	6.45	6.40	6.35
6.05	6.00	5.95	5.90	5.85	6.50	6.45	6.40	6.35	6.30
6.00	5.95	5.90	5.85	5.80	6.45	6.40	6.35	6.30	6.25
5.95	5.90	5.85	5.80	5.75	6.40	6.35	6.30	6.25	6.20
5.90	5.85	5.80	5.75	5.70	6.35	6.30	6.25	6.20	6.15
5.85	5.80	5.75	5.70	5.65	6.30	6.25	6.20	6.15	6.10
5.80	5.75	5.70	5.65	5.60	6.25	6.20	6.15	6.10	6.05
5.75	5.70	5.65	5.60	5.55	6.20	6.15	6.10	6.05	6.00
5.70	5.65	5.60	5.55	5.50	6.15	6.10	6.05	6.00	5.95
5.65	5.60	5.55	5.50	5.45	6.10	6.05	6.00	5.95	5.90
5.60	5.55	5.50	5.45	5.40	6.05	6.00	5.95	5.90	5.85
5.55	5.50	5.45	5.40	5.35	6.00	5.95	5.90	5.85	5.80
5.50	5.45	5.40	5.35	5.30	5.95	5.90	5.85	5.80	5.75
5.45	5.40	5.35	5.30	5.25	5.90	5.85	5.80	5.75	5.70
5.40	5.35	5.30	5.25	5.20	5.85	5.80	5.75	5.70	5.65
5.35	5.30	5.25	5.20	5.15	5.80	5.75	5.70	5.65	5.60
5.30	5.25	5.20	5.15	5.10	5.75	5.70	5.65	5.60	5.55
5.25	5.20	5.15	5.10	5.05	5.70	5.65	5.60	5.55	5.50
5.20	5.15	5.10	5.05	5.00	5.65	5.60	5.55	5.50	5.45
5.15	5.10	5.05	5.00	4.95	5.60	5.55	5.50	5.45	5.40
5.10	5.05	5.00	4.95	4.90	5.55	5.50	5.45	5.40	5.35
5.05	5.00	4.95	4.90	4.85	5.50	5.45	5.40	5.35	5.30
5.00	4.95	4.90	4.85	4.80	5.45	5.40	5.35	5.30	5.25
4.95	4.90	4.85	4.80	4.75	5.40	5.35	5.30	5.25	5.20
4.90	4.85	4.80	4.75	4.70	5.35	5.30	5.25	5.20	5.15
4.85	4.80	4.75	4.70	4.65	5.30	5.25	5.20	5.15	5.10
4.80	4.75	4.70	4.65	4.60	5.25	5.20	5.15	5.10	5.05
4.75	4.70	4.65	4.60	4.55	5.20	5.15	5.10	5.05	5.00
4.70	4.65	4.60	4.55	4.50	5.15	5.10	5.05	5.00	4.95
4.65	4.60	4.55	4.50	4.45	5.10	5.05	5.00	4.95	4.90
4.60	4.55	4.50	4.45	4.40	5.05	5.00	4.95	4.90	4.85
4.55	4.50	4.45	4.40	4.35	5.00	4.95	4.90	4.85	4.80
4.50	4.45	4.40	4.35	4.30	4.95	4.90	4.85	4.80	4.75
4.45	4.40	4.35	4.30	4.25	4.90	4.85	4.80	4.75	4.70
4.40	4.35	4.30	4.25	4.20	4.85	4.80	4.75	4.70	4.65



COMMENT

"Those who claim the creation of a flexible labour market is capable of producing sustained low-inflationary growth have yet to prove their case"

Echoes of 1987 appear in the labour market

After the shock of the rise in retail price inflation to 3.9 per cent last week, the latest sales figures were eagerly awaited for evidence of how consumers might be responding to the attempt by retailers to rebuild margins. Fierce competition in the high street has been a key reason why intense cost pressures in manufacturing have not translated into a big hike in retail price inflation.

On the face of it, flat retail sales in September - representing the first annual fall since 1992 - are as clear a response from consumers as the Treasury, for one, might have hoped. You can push prices up, but don't expect us to buy, seems to be the message from consumers. Well, maybe. With both the inflation and sales figures clearly affected by a long, hot summer, it would be premature to conclude that consumers will necessarily have the last word in this tug of war with retailers. For that, we really will need to see more evidence.

In the longer term, the inflationary outlook hinges on the behaviour of the labour market. If there was general surprise in the City at the weakness of retail sales, there was just as much astonishment at the apparent buoyancy of the labour market. The decline in claimant unemployment, which was petering out in the first half of the year, appears to have resumed.

The unemployment count may be somewhat flattered by the effects of the academic year, as new graduates take up jobs or return to higher education. On the other

hand, the new rules associated with the switch to incapacity benefit are estimated to be leading to a modest increase in claimant unemployment. The clearest evidence that the labour market is more active than had been thought came from the Labour Force Survey, which showed the biggest increase in a three month period in employment since it started to recover in 1993.

So far, however, renewed buoyancy in the labour market is not leading to a pick-up in underlying earnings. These grew by 3.25 per cent in August, the same as in July and down on June. Provided this remains the case, we can relax about the prospects for inflation.

This is a big proviso. Goldman Sachs has warned that on a wide range of measures - such as the ratio of vacancies to short-term unemployment - the labour market is showing characteristics last seen in early 1987. This was just before wage inflation began to pick up in earnest. Headline inflation may fall next month because of the cut in mortgage rates, but those who claim the creation of a flexible labour market is capable of producing sustained low inflationary growth have yet to prove their case.

Another teaser on competition policy

The Department of Trade and Industry is teasing us again over competition policy, and very irritating it is after all the Gov-

ernment's broken promises on reform over the last six years. Jonathan Evans, the Corporate Affairs Minister, has written to Richard Caborn, chairman of the Commons trade and industry committee, suggesting an important change in the way competition is policed. The DTI says, drawing up proposals to make the Office of Fair Trading more like a single competition authority which both investigates problems and implements the remedies.

The role of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission would then be to give an independent judgement where cases are contested. According to Mr Evans, "this may require some rebalancing of the roles of the OFT and MMC, giving the latter a primarily adjudicating role." This is a significant shift, at a time when the Government is fighting off suggestions from Mr Caborn's committee, from Labour and from Sir Bryan Carsberg, the former director general of the OFT, that there should be a single competition authority.

Mr Evans opposes any radical reform like that. But his letter gives a lot of ground to critics of the present system. The more important issue, however, is whether the competition authorities - whatever form they take - should be given more power to act directly against abuses. In the UK, the emphasis is on lengthy investigation followed eventually by action, usually in the form of a ban against repeat offences. The prohibition system common on the Continent tends to ban anti-competitive practices first and

then argue about them in court afterwards.

There is a consensus that more prohibition is needed in the UK, a consensus which Mr Evans seems to go along with at least to some extent. It is when it comes to the detail, that the practice seems to fall short of the rhetoric. Mr Evans does indeed envisage an OFT with strengthened powers of investigation, the ability to demand undertakings from companies as an alternative to MMC investigations, and powers to make interim relief orders banning undesirable activities.

But other important changes to strengthen the OFT which the Government, the Opposition and Sir Bryan all agree are desirable, have been promised by DTI ministers in announcements in 1989 and 1993 and there is still no sign of them appearing in a Queen's Speech. Mr Evans may well believe what he says about strengthening the OFT, but does his boss, Ian Lang?

Testing times ahead for Body Shop

Has The Body Shop passed its sell-by date, as the collapse in half-year profits and steadily declining share price would indicate, or is this just a temporary aberration? In time-honoured fashion, Gordon Roddick, chairman, describes what is plainly proving a difficult year as one of "consolidation". That is usually code for worse to come. For the time being, however, Mr Roddick continues to in-

sist there will be little overall change in profits for the year. With like-for-like sales more or less static, losses in the US mounting, and costs spiralling, it is hard to see how this can be the case, but who knows, he could be right.

The big question, however, is not so much where short-term profits are heading as whether Body Shop's retail concept - revolutionary enough in its time - has outgrown its shelf life. Body Shop clearly believes not, for it is continuing to expand at breakneck speed. Some 90 new stores were opened in the half-year, taking the total to 1,300 worldwide. For the time being the expansion has stopped generating profits growth, but it is only a matter of time before that picks up again too, Body Shop insists. We'll see.

The test will be at Christmas. This all-important trading season is not going to be an easy one for Body Shop. Its green credentials have been challenged, and, however unfairly, some of the mud has inevitably stuck. Meanwhile, other more traditional retailers of toiletry and skin-care products have made great strides in introducing their own environmental and animal-friendly lines. Body Shop no longer has the free ride it once did.

As a small niche player on the high street and in the shopping malls, there was always going to be a good place for Body Shop. More questionable is whether the company's limited product range and brand name can sustain the international retail organisation that Body Shop aspires to be.

Former high-street salesman reaps handsome reward for his one-man furniture venture

Kirkham to raise £60m in share sale

TOM STEVENSON
Deputy City Editor

Graham Kirkham, the son of a Yorkshire miner who left school at 16 with no O levels, is to raise £60m by selling one-third of his 52 per cent stake in DFS Furniture, the three-piece suite retailer he founded 26 years ago.

Mr Kirkham said the share sale came in response to repeated phone calls from institutions anxious to buy shares in what is a very tight market. Ever jockey and amiable, he admitted, that his motives were not completely altruistic - he wouldn't be sorry to accept the money.

The proceeds of the share sale will bolster the £130m it took away from DFS's 1993 flotation, when he sold 48 per cent of the family-owned business. Even after the disposal, Mr Kirkham will retain a stake of about 35 per cent in the furniture retailer, worth more than £100m at yesterday's closing price of 345p.

News of the share sale accompanied strong full-year profit figures for the 12 months to July and a special 10p dividend to shareholders to reduce the company's fast growing cash pile. Pre-tax profits jumped 23

per cent to £26.23m despite flagging consumer demand and a moribund housing market, normally a prerequisite for growing sales of household goods.

Even before the special payout, the underlying dividend growth was a healthy 15 per cent from 7.2p a share to 8.3p.

A keen collector, Mr Kirkham agreed the art market would welcome his decision to release another slice of his considerable wealth. He remains resolutely unimpressed by money, keeping a substantial art and antiques collection in a beautiful Georgian mansion, Cantley Hall, where he occasionally entertains, but chooses to live in an unassuming four-bedroom modern house a few miles away.

Mr Kirkham remained tight-lipped about his plans for the £60m, but he dismissed suggestions that he would dilute his interest in DFS by sinking the money into yachts or football clubs - "DFS is not a job, it's a way of life" - and laughed off suggestions that he would repeat a recent multi-million pound loan to the Tory party.

After a year during which the company paused for breath,

opening just one new outlet at the end of the financial period, DFS also announced an ambitious expansion programme and a move out of its Midlands and Northern heartland into southern England.

Mr Kirkham's proposed share sale is the latest reward for the former salesman at Hardys, a high-street furniture chain that became part of Harris

plain analysts believed more special dividends were likely in future years as the company continued to throw off more cash than it could spend opening new shops.

Mr Kirkham's proposed share sale is the latest reward for the former salesman at Hardys, a high-street furniture chain that became part of Harris

Queensway. Impatient with working for someone else, he struck out in 1969 and set up DFS. The model of vertical integration, DFS made its own furniture upstairs, bringing it down to the showroom. Mr Kirkham was delivery man, salesman and accountant; he even cut the material.

Investment column, page 24

Asked about his father's attitude to MCC's share price, Kevin said: "There is no question that the share price of his publicly quoted companies was a matter of pride ... a part of his vanity ... if the share price was rising he felt better."

"He felt the share price reflected in part public esteem for his business. So it was the first thing he looked for in the morning and the last thing at night. It was a personal fixation."

To counteract this he consulted with his main adviser,

Kevin tells of father's share price 'vanity'

JOHN WILLCOCK
Financial Correspondent

Robert Maxwell regarded the share price of his business empire as a measure of his personal popularity, "part of his vanity", and ploughed millions of pounds into supporting the price, his youngest son Kevin said yesterday.

The late tycoon came to believe that the share price of Maxwell Communication Corporation (MCC) was being driven down in 1991 by a bear raid, an organised group of speculators.

On his third day of giving evidence Kevin Maxwell told the court his view of the collapse of the Maxwell business empire in 1991.

Questioned by his counsel Alun Jones QC, Kevin said that his father spent millions in 1991 trying to support the MCC share price, but failed for two reasons: the London Stock Exchange was lenient in making the speculators pay for the stock; and the investment bank Goldman Sachs was in effect collateral for Maxwell loans.

Asked about his father's attitude to MCC's share price, Kevin said: "There is no question that the share price of his publicly quoted companies was a matter of pride ... a part of his vanity ... if the share price was rising he felt better."

"He felt the share price reflected in part public esteem for his business. So it was the first thing he looked for in the morning and the last thing at night. It was a personal fixation."

To counteract this he consulted with his main adviser,

The Maxwell Trial



Day 50

Goldman Sachs' Eric Sheinberg, to buy MCC shares through offshore entities. But the price did not improve much.

Kevin said he had seen statements made to the Serious Fraud Office by Mr Sheinberg and told the court that the prosecution "haven't called Eric Sheinberg and they should".

Earlier Kevin had described to the court his father's interest in Israel, which he said had not really started until the late 1980s, although his father had always been interested in and supported the state of Israel.

Robert Maxwell's interest in Israel "was stimulated by what can be described as a return to his roots". His son said he had survived the Holocaust but most of his family, who were Jewish, had perished.

Kevin said he had grown up not realising his father had any relatives but extensive research by his mother had uncovered some 200 relatives in different parts of the world.

Robert Maxwell had financed the massive airlift of Jewish children from Chernobyl after the 1986 nuclear disaster and assisted with their resettlement in Israel.

His substantial investments in the Israeli companies Scitex

and Teva were seen in Israel as showing confidence in the country at a time when Israel was seen as risky.

Kevin, his brother Ian and the former Maxwell adviser Larry Trachtenberg deny conspiracy to defraud the pension funds by misusing £22m worth of shares in Teva as security for a loan in a bid to prop up the crumbling Maxwell empire in the days following its founder's death.

Kevin alone denies a similar charge of conspiring with his late father to misuse £100m of Scitex shares to pay private Maxwell company debts. In both cases the prosecution claims the shares were not theirs to use but belonged to the pension fund.

Kevin had told the court that he believed what his father had told him - that the shares had been transferred from the pension fund to the Robert Maxwell Group - and that he acted legally.

Kevin told the jury that, with the benefit of reflection, the death of his father and the loss of his famed negotiating skills was decisive. He admitted: "I did not have his stature, his reputation. I did not have 40 years of business experience when facing the NatWest and the group's other bankers."

Questioned by his counsel about the origins of the group's failure and the degree of responsibility he felt, Kevin replied: "I feel that I share a significant responsibility for the collapse of the business."

He went on to list causes, including disastrous losses of over £300m in share values in the 1987 world stock market crash.

The trial continues today.

Unemployment falls but recovery evades the high street

PAUL WALLACE
Economics Editor

Unemployment fell in September by more than in any month this year, but there was no sign of recovery in the high street, with retail sales slip to lower level than a year ago.

The decline of 27,000 in the claimant total was much larger than the markets had expected. Spread across all regions, the fall in unemployment brought the jobless count down to 2,265,000.

The marked trend since the start of the year of progressively smaller monthly declines in unemployment now appears to be reversing itself. According to the

Central Statistical Office, the monthly decline in unemployment is currently running at between 10,000 and 15,000.

However, flat retail sales in September also came as a surprise to the markets, which had been expecting a rise of more than half a per cent on August.

This in turn meant retail sales were half a per cent down on their level in September 1994, the first time they have fallen at an annual rate since 1992.

Supermarkets, which pushed up prices aggressively last

month, saw a decline in sales of 1.3 per cent compared with August. However, textile, clothing and footwear stores, which also increased prices, saw a rise in sales of 1.6 per cent.

The effects of a hot summer make it difficult to work out what the implications of the figures are for retail price inflation.

"The real test will come in October and November," said Ian Shepherdson, economist at HSBC Markets, "as retailers and consumers play out their familiar cat-and-mouse game."

"Something has to give," said

Geoffrey Dicks, UK economist at NatWest Markets. With underlying earnings still rising at only 3.25 per cent in August, consumers were feeling the pinch. Now that retailers were more determined to pass on higher costs, the effect was being felt in declining sales.

Underlying earnings remained particularly modest in the service sector where the rate of increase remains at 2.5 per cent.

This was despite further indications that the labour market was more buoyant than had been thought. Vacancies at

Jobcentres - which account for about a third of all vacancies in the economy - rose in September by 10,000 to 193,000, their highest level for more than five years.

Another positive reading of the labour market came from the quarterly Labour Force Survey (LFS), which is based on a sample of 60,000 households. This showed that unemployment, measured according to international conventions, fell by 18,000 in the summer (June to August) compared with the spring (March to May). In the spring it had risen

by 28,000. According to the LFS, employment rose by 17,000 during the summer, with most of the new jobs going to women who rejoined the workforce. This was the biggest increase in employment since it began to rise again in mid-1993.

Manufacturing employment fell in the second quarter by 4,000. Further pressure on jobs in the sector may come from the fact that unit labour costs rose by 3.6 per cent in the three months ending August. Productivity rose by only 1 per cent, its lowest since June 1991.

tal increase in employment since spring 1993.

The most likely explanation of the drop in unemployment" said Geoffrey Dicks, UK economist at NatWest Markets, "is that jobs are being created in the services sector where the low rate of wage increase is pricing people into jobs."

Manufacturing employment fell in the second quarter by 4,000. Further pressure on jobs in the sector may come from the fact that unit labour costs rose by 3.6 per cent in the three months ending August. Productivity rose by only 1 per cent, its lowest since June 1991.

Comment, above

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business

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN Edited by TOM STEVENSON

DFS maintains unbroken record with £26m profit

One of the biggest problems of DFS Furniture is finding anyone who has not fallen under the spell of Graham Kirkham, its charming chairman. If, like him, you have taken £180m out of your company in two years and still hold a stake worth more than £100m you can probably afford to be extremely nice, but his attention to putting people at their ease is crucial to the success of the company. In a commodity business like selling three-piece suites, making the customer feel king is a crucial differential.

The success of DFS's approach was confirmed yesterday when the company announced its 26th successive year of growth, increased its full year payout by 15 per cent and rewarded shareholders with a special dividend worth 10p a share.

Pre-tax profits jumped 23 per cent in the 12 months to July from £22.73m to £26.23m, although that was slightly flattered by the inclusion last year of the costs of coming in the market.

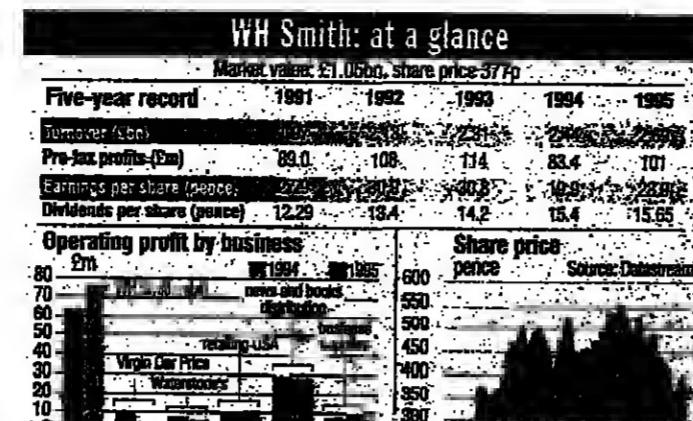
Stripping that out, underlying prof-

its rose 15.4 per cent, with earnings per share 15.1 per cent ahead at 16.57p. The dividend is increased from 7.2p to 8.3p.

Cynics might question how a company can do so well selling furniture in the face of fragile consumer spending, still undermined by the moribund housing market. But it is hard to argue with underlying sales growth of 8 per cent and such strong cash flow that even after adding new outlets at a rate of six a year there is money left over to hand back to shareholders.

DFS reckons that, with a market share of only 8 per cent, it can continue to grow at the current rate for the next decade at least. From its current base of 32 shops, it is aiming for a chain of at least 100 strong. If it can translate its success in the Midlands and North to the South and South West of England, where it presently has no exposure at all, DFS will become a dominant force in household retailing.

Brokers are pencilling in prof-



its for the year to next July of £30m, implying earnings per share of 19p and a prospective price/earnings ratio of 18, with the shares down 8p at 345p yesterday. In the short run that appears pretty demanding, but if the growth projections are half achievable this is a share to tuck away and forget about.

Upturn hopes at WH Smith

Is sentiment at last turning in favour of WH Smith? The shares have underperformed the rest of the stock market by 35 per cent since the beginning of a very difficult year, but

yesterday saw them bounce 22p to 375p as apparent signs of a sales recovery emerged from the annual meeting.

The company said sales in the UK retail business were an "encouraging" 7.4 per cent ahead in the first quarter to 2 September. But the WH Smith retail chain, which was at the root of May's profit warning, is clearly not out of the woods yet.

The headline growth rate of 2.8 per cent at Smith looked reasonable, given that economic malaise and hot weather kept consumers out of the shops over the three summer months. However, increased spending on advertising, promotion and improved store layouts – has only barely reversed last year's 1.3 per cent underlying fall in sales, turning it into a rather anaemic 1.4 per cent like-for-like increase in the first quarter.

Smith warned yesterday that further rationalisation will shave £20m from first half profits, leaving them "materially lower". Brokers are now looking for full year profits of

below £96m, putting the shares on a prospective multiple of 17. Smith still needs to put its long-sought after new chief executive in place to fully reverse the negative sentiment. Until then, the shares are high enough.

Bluebird sets up Disney link

Bluebird Toys has enjoyed meteoric growth on the back of its miniature characters, ranging from Mighty Max to Polly Pocket. But after a stunning rise in 1993, the shares marked time last year as the stock market latched on to the risks in this branch of the toys market.

That all changed yesterday following news that Bluebird had signed a deal with Mattel, its main distributor, and Walt Disney to market a new range of miniature characters based on Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and their extensive relations. No figures were placed on

the deal, but it does not take a lot of imagination to see that the enormous pulling power of the Disney brand could lever Bluebird on to a new plane. The shares responded accordingly, soaring 100p to 570p for a one-day rise of 37 per cent.

Followers of the company had been fretting over the rapid demise of Mighty Max, which did £46m of sales in the first two years but hit the buffers in 1995, when business is expected to slump to £9m. That will knock a sizeable hole in group turnover worth £99.4m last year, which will not be entirely made up by the launch of Minnie and the Goofy Goons, forecast to add £9m to this year's sales.

The launch next year will do nothing for 1995 profits, which if they hit £18m would put the shares on a prospective p/e of 15. But analysts expect Disney could add at least £1.5m to next year's bottom line, taking it to £24m and reducing the multiple to 11. That still looks reasonable value, particularly given that Mattel trades on around 20.

Harris unrolls carpet format

NIGEL COPE

margin, high-volume business. It's very exciting."

However, there are concerns that the new larger stores might cannibalise the existing Carpetright outlets. Kingfisher has already found that its new Warehouse DIY stores have hit the existing branches of B&Q.

The new, larger style stores

are called Carpet Depot. They feature a wider range of stock and include a more upmarket range costing up to £50 a square metre and will offer interest-free credit whereas Carpetright's other stores do most of their business in cash, cheque and credit card.

The first branch opened in

West Thurrock in Essex last

month. A fourth opens near Edinburgh next week and the company plans a rapid expansion to a chain of 70 outlets over the next four years.

Sir Phil said: "It will meet the

department stores like John

Lewis head-on. It will be a low-

day after flotation two years ago Carpetright has expanded to a chain of more than 200 stores. In June it reported a 40 per cent increase in profits to £20m for the year to April. The shares closed 4p lower yesterday at 342p.

COMPANY RESULTS				
	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Berry Blush & Mabel (I)	3.44m (4.05m)	-0.05m (0.38m)	1.2p (4.4p)	n/a (1.0p)
BOA Holdings (I)	0.36m (0.71m)	-0.07m (-0.55m)	-0.36p (-3.01p)	n/a (n/a)
Blockley's (I)	5.38m (5.24m)	-1.21m (0.11m)	-0.38p (0.32p)	n/a (0.4p)
Body Shop International (I)	105m (93.5m)	9.1m (12.3m)	2.8p (4.2p)	1.08p (0.9p)
Bridgford-Boundary (F)	20.4m (27.1m)	1.34m (0.74m)	6.64p (6.10p)	3.6p (3p)
DFS Furniture Co (F)	145m (138m)	26.3m (21.4m)	16.57p (14.38p)	8.3p (7.2p)
Esprit (F)	7.50m (5.8m)	1.48m (1.13m)	4.34p (5.21p)	1.1p (1p)
Harrods Europe (I)	22.0m (15.7m)	2.04m (1.56m)	5.3p (3.2p)	1.2p (1p)
Town Centre Stores (F)	22.0m (20.0m)	9.3m (8.8m)	6.30p (5.40p)	3.25p (3.04p)
WAVS Group (F)	15.11m (14.98m)	1.162m (1.128m)	10.2p (8.7p)	2.657p (2.415p)
(I) - Quarterly (F) - Final (I) - Interim				

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FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES

STERLING		DOLLAR		D-MARKS	
Country	Spot	1 month	Spot	1 month	Spot
US	1.6980	12-10	34.81	1.0000	-
Canada	2.0090	10-2	1.3582	4.7	15-50
Germany	2.2292	50-44	151.141	1.4230	15-50
France	2.2160	50-44	150.188	1.4230	1.0000
UK	7.2140	74-20	228.261	160.15	1.0000
Ireland	7.2121	74-21	228.261	160.15	1.0000
Japan	15.7655	57-23	100.40	47.5-6.5	70.75
SGX	1.2105	12-24	31.05	1.2624	0.3-2
Netherlands	8.0550	53-32	221.155	151.37	15-50
Norway	8.0550	53-32	221.155	151.37	15-50
Australia	0.9753	11-24	24.21	1.3914	1.1168
New Zealand	0.9753	11-24	24.21	1.3914	2.2762
Spain	162.75	39-21	131.147	122.20	39-40
Sweden	10.759	10-23	54.85	6.8400	160.3
Switzerland	1.0085	72-25	219.155	154.2	4.0155
Australia	2.0767	10-16	52.41	0.7545	15-50
Hong Kong	12.0220	22-20	7.7200	0-10	8.354
Malta	1.0000	10-20	22.00	0.5000	1.0000
New Zealand	2.3554	20-44	65.110	0.8570	15-13
South Africa	5.8660	57-17	161.47	3.7500	0-14
Wageningen	2.2110	36-51	130.147	1.4230	35-35

OTHER SPOT RATES

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	1.2500	1.2500	Malta	1.2500	1.2500
Bahrain	0.8542	0.8542	China	0.8543	0.8543
Belgium	1.020415	1.020415	Philippines	40.4220	31.05
China	1.020415	1.020415	Poland	1.020415	1.020415
Egypt	1.020415	1.020415	Portugal	1.020415	1.020415
Finland	1.020415	1.020415	Qatar	0.7100	0.7100
Greece	1.020415	1.020415	Spain	0.8540	0.8540
Hong Kong	1.020415	1.020415	Sweden	1.020415	1.020415
Iceland	1.020415	1.020415	Turkey	1.020415	1.020415
India	1.020415	1.020415	UAE	1.020415	1.020415
Indonesia	1.020415	1.020415	United States	1.020415	1.020415
Iran	1.020415	1.020415	United Kingdom	1.020415	1.020415
Ireland	1.020415	1.020415	Venezuela	1.020415	1.020415
Italy	1.020415	1.020415	Yemen	1.020415	1.020415
Korea	1.020415	1.020415	Zambia	1.020415	1.020415
Lithuania	1.020415	1.020415	Zimbabwe	1.020415	1.020415
Morocco	1.020415	1.020415			

TOURIST RATES

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Austria	2.0000	2.0000	France (France)	7.2400	7.2400
Belgium	2.0000	2.0000	Germany (West)	2.1000	2.1000
Denmark	2.0000	2.0000	Greece (Greece)	3.6000	3.6000
Finland	2.0000	2.0000	Iceland	2.0000	2.0000
Ireland	2.0000	2.0000	Italy (Italy)	2.0000	2.0000
Latvia	2.0000	2.0000	Malta	2.0000	2.0000
Norway	2.0000	2.0000	Portugal (Portugal)	2.0000	2.0000
Spain	2.0000	2.0000	Sweden	2.0000	2.0000
Switzerland	2.0000	2.0000	United Kingdom	2.0000	2.0000
Yugoslavia	2.0000	2.0000	Yugoslavia	2.0000	2.0000

INTEREST RATES

Rate	1 day	2 days	3 days	4 days
Australia (Dollars)	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000
Belgium (Belgian)	14.3000	14.3000	14.3000	14.3000
Belgium (French)	44.4000	44.4000	44.4000	44.4000
Canada (Dollars)	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000
Cyprus (Pounds)	0.8000	0.8000	0.8000	0.8000
Denmark (Kroner)	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Finland (Mark)	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000
France (Francs)	7.2400	7.2400	7.2400	7.2400
Germany (Mark)	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Iceland	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000
Ireland (Pounds)	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Italy (Lira)	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Japan (Yen)	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Malta	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000
Norway (Krone)	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Portugal (Escudos)	357.0000	357.0000	357.0000	357.0000
Spain (Peseta)	11.8000	11.8000	11.8000	11.8000
Sweden (Krona)	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Switzerland (Franc)	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000
Yugoslavia	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000

BOND YIELDS

Country	5yr	yield %	10yr	yield %	Country	5yr	yield %	10yr	yield %
UK	8%	7.54	8%	8.00	Netherlands	9%	5.57	8.57	8.57
Austria	8%	5.57	8%	6.00	Spain	12.25	10.11	10.11	10.11
Belgium	8%	5.57	8%	6.00	Sweden	12.25	10.11	10.11	10.11
Denmark	8%	5.57	8%	6.00	Switzerland	12.25	10.11	10.11	10.11
Finland	8%	5.57	8%	6.00	Yugoslavia	12.25	10.11	10.11	10.11
France	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%					
Germany	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%					
Iceland	8%	5.57	8%	6.00					
Ireland	8%	5.57	8%	6.00					
Italy	8%	5.57	8%	6.00					
Netherlands	8%	5.57	8%	6.00					
Norway	8%	5.57	8%	6.00					
Portugal	8%	5.57	8%	6.00					
Spain	8%	5.57	8%	6.00					
Sweden	8%	5.57	8%	6.00					
Switzerland	8%	5.57	8%	6.00					
Yugoslavia	8%	5.57	8%	6.00					

MONEY MARKET RATES

Contract	Settlement price	High/Low	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year

</tbl

sport



The people's champion: Billy Ellison puts Red Rum through his paces on Southport sands, and Tommy Stack celebrates the horse's third Grand National triumph in 1977



Photographs: Keystone/Hulton Deutsch

The warrior who became a national treasure

Red Rum, the most celebrated jumping horse of them all, died yesterday, aged 30. In keeping with the great romance of his career and life, the horse was immediately buried at the Aintree venue he dominated for so long. When the sun shines over the winning post at the Grand National next April, the shadow should fall on the old warrior's grave.

It was Red Rum's greatest skill that he deserved his best for the race that the British public reserve as their favourite. A record of three victories, as well as two seconds, in the Grand National, delivered him a place in the common lexicon.

As a young horse Red Rum was united with one of the few personalities who could match him, Lester Piggott. "I'm very sorry to hear of his death," the recently retired jockey said. "He was a racing institution and stayed in our yard on more than one occasion when he

was down to open betting shops in the area. It's a very, very sad loss."

Red Rum it was who showed that retired racehorses did not have to shiver their lives away in the corner of a field. His exploits on the racecourse earned him almost £115,000 in first-place prize money, but he is generally thought to have added a zero to that figure with his public appearances.

Yet Red Rum should not really have jumped a fence at all. He was bred at the Rossemara Stud in Co Kilkenny to be a Flat horse as he

was by the sprinter Quorum (stallion fee £198) out of a mare called Mared, who cost 240 guineas at the sales. England had yet to win the World Cup. Red Rum himself was, as a yearling, sent to Goffs Sales in Ireland, where he slipped to the ground. Few people were ever to see the horse fall again.

The gelding's early career on the Flat and then over jumps was char-

acterised more by the quantity than quality of his performances. The defining moment of his life came when he was sent to the August Doncaster Sales of 1972 and was purchased for 6,000 guineas by Donald "Ginger" McCain. The trainer bought the horse for an old owner, Noel Le Mare, a Lancashire construction engineer whose boyhood ambitions were to become a millionaire, marry a beautiful woman and win the Grand National. By the time Red Rum came into his keeping, when he was 84, he was happy he had achieved the first two objectives.

The charm of McCain's yard was that it was located behind a car showroom in Southport. More pertinently for the horse, it placed him close to the sea. From a relatively early age, Red Rum had suffered from pedalositis, a form of arthritis of the foot which usually means the guillotine for a racehorse's career. Special shoeing and drugs alleviated

the problem, but it was generally recognised that it was cured by the gelding's regular walks in the up-to-then unheralded spa waters of the Irish Sea.

The following spring Red Rum went to Aintree for the first time as one of the most improved horses in training. Oddly, considering the adulation that was to follow, he was something of an anti-hero that day as he swept past the bold, front-running but exhausted Crisp just yards from the line in a course record time.

In 1974 Red Rum was topweight and the third favourite and won again before going on to success in

the Scottish National at Ayr. For the next two years he was second, behind L'Escarot and Rag Trade, but in 1977 he was back for a fifth attempt. He won by 25 lengths and then went to celebrate with some of his supporters. "The horse was invited into a hotel in Southport," Tommy Stack, who had taken over the ride from Brian Fletcher, remembered yesterday. "He proceeded to walk up the steps and into the lobby for a drink."

That was to be Red Rum's last victory, however. The following season, as a 13-year-old, he was made hot favourite for the National but injured a heel eight days before the race. He never ran again. In all he competed 100 times over jumps, winning 24 of his starts.

The public were still able to see much of the horse at his many engagements, though, and he was routinely at the head of the Grand National parade. He missed that ap-

pointment this year, but he did make one final appearance at Aintree on 3 May, the actual date of his 30th birthday.

Red Rum was moved from the Southport base of glory to new premises at Cholmondeley, in Cheshire, five years ago and when staff arrived at his box yesterday morning they knew there would be no more parades, no more day-breaks for the old horse. He was found to be in a distressed state and the decision to have him humanely destroyed was quickly taken.

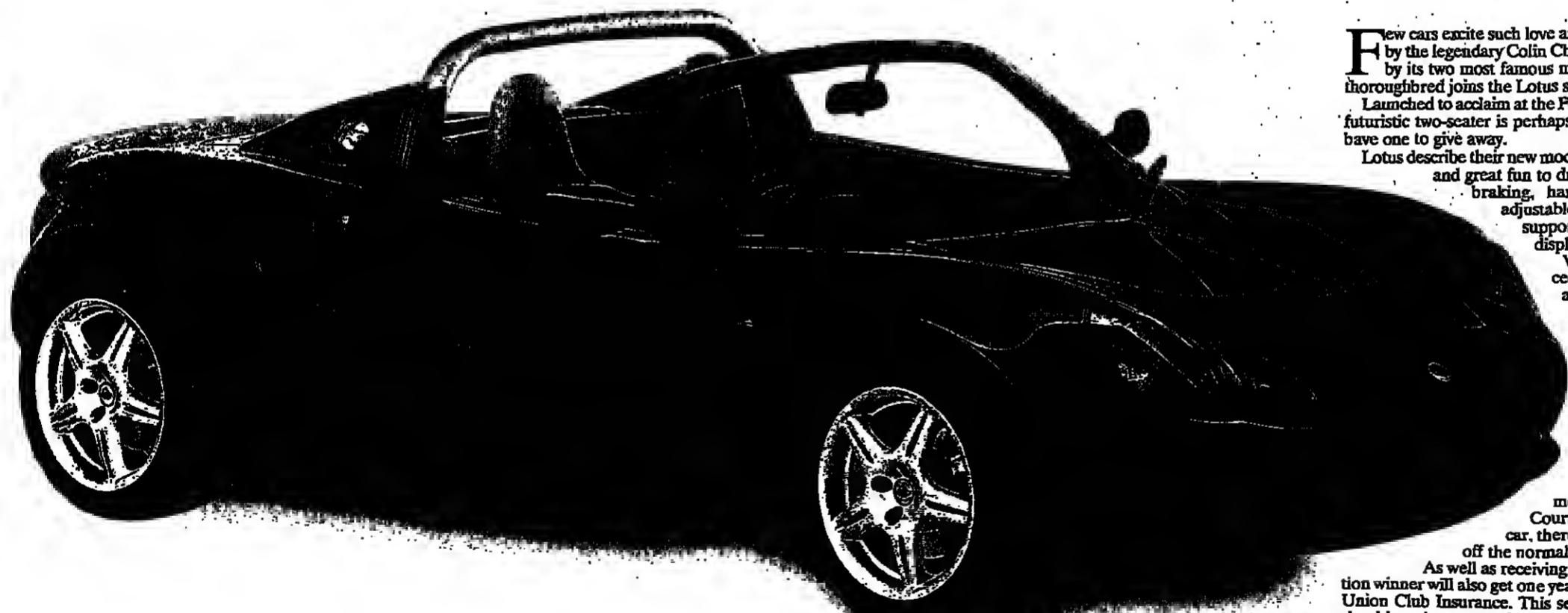
"It wasn't just his five Grand Nationals, but it was the Scottish National and he was a short-head second in the Hennessy," McCain said yesterday. "He was a tremendous old competitor, but much more than that he switched on Blackpool lights and was Chieftain of Honour at the Highland Games. He was a very remarkable horse, a seriously magical horse."

Five years that shook the racing world

1973 Grand National	1974	1975	1976	1977
1 RED RUM 9-1 4-6f	1 RED RUM 12-1	1 L'ESCAROT 13-2	1 HAG TRADE 14-1	1 RED RUM 9-1
2 Chieftain 9-1 1-1f	2 L'Escarot 17-2	2 Red Rum 7-2 2-1f	2 Hag Trade 10-1	2 Chieftain 10-1 2-1f
3 L'Escarot 11-1	3 Charles Dickens 20-1 3 Spanish Steps 20-1	4 Spanish Steps 17-2	4 Spanish Steps 28-1	3 Chieftain 21-2
4 Spanish Steps 16-1	4 Spanish Steps 15-1	4 Money Market 14-1	4 Salome 7-1 4-1f	4 The Phoenix 20-1

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Lotus describe their new model as "small, strong, ultra-light, very fast and great fun to drive". The low weight of 675kg benefits braking, handling and steering response. The adjustable driver's seat gives firm yet comfortable support and the minimalist instrumentation displays clear, immediate information.

Visually the car is stunning, the curvaceous lines set off by unique five-spoke alloy wheels. The light weight and aerodynamic shape makes the Elise a "green" machine, cutting down on fuel consumption and thus carbon dioxide emissions.

The 1.795cc 4-cylinder fuel-injected engine delivers a top speed of around 120mph and the Elise, worth approximately £20,000, comes with catalytic converter, engine immobiliser, cloth trim and black vinyl hood.

Lotus are exhibiting the Elise at this month's Motor Show at London's Earls Court and to make it easier to view our prize car, there is a voucher on this page that gives £2 off the normal entry price of £5.

As well as receiving the keys to a Lotus Elise, our competition winner will also get one year's free insurance provided by Norwich Union Club Insurance. This service offers a 24-hour Clubline which, should you have an accident, connects you to a dedicated Club Incident Manager who will take immediate care of the problem.

To be in with a chance of winning our prize you must collect six differently numbered tokens from the 14 we are printing in the Independent and the Independent on Sunday. At least one token must come from the Independent on Sunday. Today we are printing Token 5 and we will print an entry form at the end of the competition.

£2 off Adult Entry or £1 off Child/Senior Citizen Entry to the London Motor Show. This voucher entitles one person to the above discount for one day at the London Motor Show (Earls Court Exhibition Centre). Please present this voucher at the ticket office. Valid 20-29 October 1995.

THE LONDON

MOTOR SHOW

EARLS COURT

19TH - 29TH

OCTOBER 1995

RULES

- To enter our Lotus Elise Prize Draw you need to collect 6 differently numbered tokens, including one from the Independent on Sunday.
- The closing date for entries is 17 November 1995. Send to: Independent/Lotus Elise Prize Draw, PO Box 203, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire AL7 1TY along with a completed entry form which will be printed on 20 and 28 October.
- For previously published tokens or an entry form send an SAE to: Independent/Lotus Elise, PO Box 38, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire AL7 1TX. State the amount of tokens you require (only 4 per application). Please mark clearly on your envelope, Token Request or Entry Form. If you need both, please send separate SAE's. Requests must be received by first post 6 November 1995.
- Employees and agents of Newspaper Publishing Plc or those of any other national newspaper company or any firm connected with the promotion are not eligible to take part, neither are their relatives nor members of their families or households. Entrants must be aged 18 or over.
- The Lotus Elise will be available in August 1996.
- The winner must co-operate for publicity purposes if required and accept that his/her name and photograph will be published in the paper.
- Photocopies of tokens and entry forms are not acceptable.
- The promoter reserves the right, in their absolute discretion to disqualify any entrant or competitor, nominee, or to add to, or waive any rules.
- No correspondence will be entered into.
- Proof of postage will not be accepted as proof of receipt. The promoter will not take responsibility for entries lost or damaged in the post.
- The competition is only open to residents of the UK and the Irish Republic. The prize will be as stated, with no cash alternative. The editor's decision is final.
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INDEPENDENT



TOKEN 5

Belmont ratings swell Lake's prospects

Racing

JOHN COBB

The cast list for the Breeders' Cup, the New York spectacular that will bring the Flat season to a climax at Belmont Park on Saturday week, was unveiled yesterday.

British stables have assembled a team of eight for this, the 12th edition of racing's world championships and, after Bernabea's victory in the Mile 12 months ago, confidence is high that the squad will not return empty-handed.

Top of the bill will be the contest between America's Cigar, unbeaten in his last 11 starts, and Godolphin's Halling, unbeaten in eight, for the Classic, the richest of the sevens race and run over a mile and a quarter on dirt.

There was also official con-

fimation that at least one of the supporting players — Haray, Hever Golf Rose, Lake Coniston, Ewington, Sayedati, Soviet Line and Tamure — should be respected by their American rivals who Lake Coniston was rated as clearly the top horse in the Sprint according to the meeting's handicappers.

Britain's leading speedster,

who has not raced since flopping at Haydock last month, is rated 6lb clear of America's best, Classy Mirage, and 8lb ahead of Hever Golf Rose.

A spin around a bend on Lingfield's all-weather track has satisfied his trainer, Geoff Lewis, that Lake Coniston can

cope with the Belmont turn. "If he can put Haydock behind him and produce his best form, he will win," Lewis said.

"He's been working great and is in good mental shape. You should have seen him turn round my paddock this morning flat out. He made Belmont look like Newmarket."

Despite that confidence, Lake Coniston is quoted at 5-1 for the Sprint and Ladbrokes see the possibility that there will be no British success as an odds-on chance. They bet 4-6 on British winners, 11-10 one or more. A single victory is 11-8 and they then offer 8-1 two wins, 50-1 three and 750-1 four.

The British runners form part of a group of 17 Europeans, the fewest since 1990. They include Ireland's Ridgewood Pearl, a leading contender for the Mile, seven from France and one from Germany.

Belmont Park has proved a

rewarding track for Europeans. Five years ago Royal Academy captured the Mile under Lester Piggott. In The Wings took the Turf and Dayjur nearly won the Sprint. Paul Cole's Ibi Bey also finished second in the Classic.

Halling is rated a 5-2 chance

by both Ladbrokes and Coral to go one better. Cigar is 4-6. This is absolutely the heavyweight championship of the world," the senior handicapper, Geoffrey Gibbs, said. "I don't ever recall a race of such marvellous quality in depth. To try and call a winner is impossible."

BREEDERS' CUP CLASSIC CORN 4-6 Cigar, 5-2 Helsing, 10-1 Freedom Cr., Heavenly Prize, 14-1 Caspian, 16-1 Fantasy, 18-1 Fantasy and 18-1 Fantasy II, 20-1 Fantasy IV, 21-1 Fantasy V, 22-1 Fantasy VI, 23-1 Fantasy VII, 24-1 Fantasy VIII, 25-1 Fantasy IX, 26-1 Fantasy X, 27-1 Fantasy XI, 28-1 Fantasy XII, 29-1 Fantasy XIII, 30-1 Fantasy XIV, 31-1 Fantasy XV, 32-1 Fantasy XVI, 33-1 Fantasy XVII, 34-1 Fantasy XVIII, 35-1 Fantasy XIX, 36-1 Fantasy XX, 37-1 Fantasy XXI, 38-1 Fantasy XXII, 39-1 Fantasy XXIII, 40-1 Fantasy XXIV, 41-1 Fantasy XXV, 42-1 Fantasy XXVI, 43-1 Fantasy XXVII, 44-1 Fantasy XXVIII, 45-1 Fantasy XXIX, 46-1 Fantasy XXX, 47-1 Fantasy XXI, 48-1 Fantasy XXII, 49-1 Fantasy XXIII, 50-1 Fantasy XXIV, 51-1 Fantasy XXV, 52-1 Fantasy XXVI, 53-1 Fantasy XXVII, 54-1 Fantasy XXVIII, 55-1 Fantasy XXIX, 56-1 Fantasy XXX, 57-1 Fantasy XXI, 58-1 Fantasy XXII, 59-1 Fantasy XXIII, 60-1 Fantasy XXIV, 61-1 Fantasy XXV, 62-1 Fantasy XXVI, 63-1 Fantasy XXVII, 64-1 Fantasy XXVIII, 65-1 Fantasy 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Graf has her break cut short

Tennis

JOHN ROBERTS
reports from Brighton

Steffi Graf still considers her "little holiday" from tax problems in Germany to have been worthwhile, even though it turned into an away-day. The Wimbledon champion's lack of match practice since winning the United States Open six weeks ago was cruelly exposed in her opening match at the Brighton international tournament when she was overwhelmed by the power and confidence of Mari-an de Swardt, a hefty South African qualifier, 6-2, 4-6, 6-1.

It was only the second defeat of the year for Graf, the other, in Toronto in August, also having been inflicted by a South African, the diminutive Amanda Coetzer, who, by coincidence, was playing on an adjacent court when the drama unfolded yesterday.

De Swardt, No 54 in the world, is the lowest ranked player to defeat Graf since she lost to Britain's Jo Durie (No 52) at Brighton in 1983 - the last occasion Graf was beaten in the tournament.

A winner of the title six times, Graf expressed disappointment at being eliminated so early when the event is about to come to a close after 18 years. So, too, did Jana Novotna, the second seed and winner of the event for the past two years, who was unable to combat the effects of a virus and the attacking style of a Dutch opponent, Miriam Ormanova, who won, 6-4, 6-1.

Graf, who was denied the opportunity to find her rhythm after taking a break from four-

namens to rest her ailing back, offered no excuses and gave de Swardt the highest praise: "For the first one and a half sets, it was the best that a woman has ever played against me." Did that include Monica Seles, Graf's last opponent, with whom she shares the world No 1 ranking? "For the first one and a half sets, yes."

During that magical period, the 24-year-old from Johannesburg gave an almost flawless display of fierce, accurate stroke play and attacking flair. "Whatever I hit went in," she marvelled. Until that is, she had a break point to lead 4-0 in the second set. Graf saved it with a trademark forehand, and produced another to revive her prospects by breaking de Swardt in the next game.

Having levelled the match, Graf appeared about to take control when de Swardt missed a volley to present her with a break point in the opening game of the final set. It was then that the South African conjured a stroke of boldness rarely seen from Graf's opponents, rescuing the situation with an ace off a second serve.

The match swiftly drifted away from Graf after she twice double-faulted and then steered a forehand over the baseline to offer de Swardt the chance to break in the second game. The South African converted with a low backhand volley, and swept into a 5-0 lead before Graf could respond to avoid a whitewash.

While the potency of de Swardt's performance surprised Graf, she had anticipated a difficult encounter, remembering her only previous match against the South African at Wimbledon.

Or

Graf

was denied the opportunity to find her rhythm after taking a break from four-

years in 1992, the German winning 7-5 in the third set.

Graf emphasised that she was as healthy as possible for someone with a chronic back injury, and said her form had not been affected by the troubles back home, where her father is in prison, accused of evading tax

on their earnings. "The only problem was on the court today," she said.

De Swardt, in her moment of triumph, expressed sympathy for Graf. "I feel really bad for her," she said. "I don't know if I could play tennis if that was going on with me. I respect her

for trying to play and felt very sorry for what she's going through."

Graf intends to go directly to a tournament in Philadelphia on 6 November, ahead of the WTA Tour Championships in New York on 13 November.

At the home of golf Greg Norman was taking the third degree on stories that he had established a lush fund in appearance money. "You guys," he said, "just don't have a clue. You can write whatever you like, you can say that I'm greedy but I just don't fill my pockets up and take off."

Norman not amused by money talk

Golf

TIM GLOVER
reports from St Andrews

At the home of golf Greg Norman was taking the third degree on stories that he had established a lush fund in appearance money. "You guys," he said, "just don't have a clue. You can write whatever you like, you can say that I'm greedy but I just don't fill my pockets up and take off."

At times, the world No 1 must have thought he had walked into a witness box instead of the press tent for the Alfred Dunhill Cup. Is it, or is it not true Mr Norman, that the reason you did not win in the World Match Play at Wentworth last week was because you wanted appearance money? The accusation, and this is rich, came from Mark McCormack, who is quoted as saying that Norman wanted £250,000.

"I know I didn't ask for that sum," the Great White Shark said. Perhaps he was being economical with the truth. McCormack's IMG run the World Match Play and they say that Norman's agent asked for a sum not unadjacent to \$250,000 (£160,000), not pounds. They say that Norman was invited and the reason he didn't play is that they refused to put up the bat.

"We've never paid appearance money at the World Match Play," an IMG man said.

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Norman, who parted company with IMG nearly two years ago, becoming the lone shark, had a different story to tell. "I would like to have played in the World Match Play but it didn't pan out. You have to be invited and I wasn't asked. In April I said I would be interested in playing and I said yes. There had been no contact since then."

McCormack was quoted as saying "Greg Norman wants money. Full stop." Norman said: "McCormack didn't have a problem asking for appearance money when I was with him. In every tournament, except those on the US Tour, IMG tried to get appearance money. Why is it suddenly different?" He added that he had not spoken to McCormack for 12 months.

Other major players, like Ernie Els and Nick Price, found the Wentworth-St Andrews double, with a combined £1,650,000 in prize money, a convenient fortnight. "We wanted Greg in the World Match Play," the IMG man said. "He'd have added to the tournament."

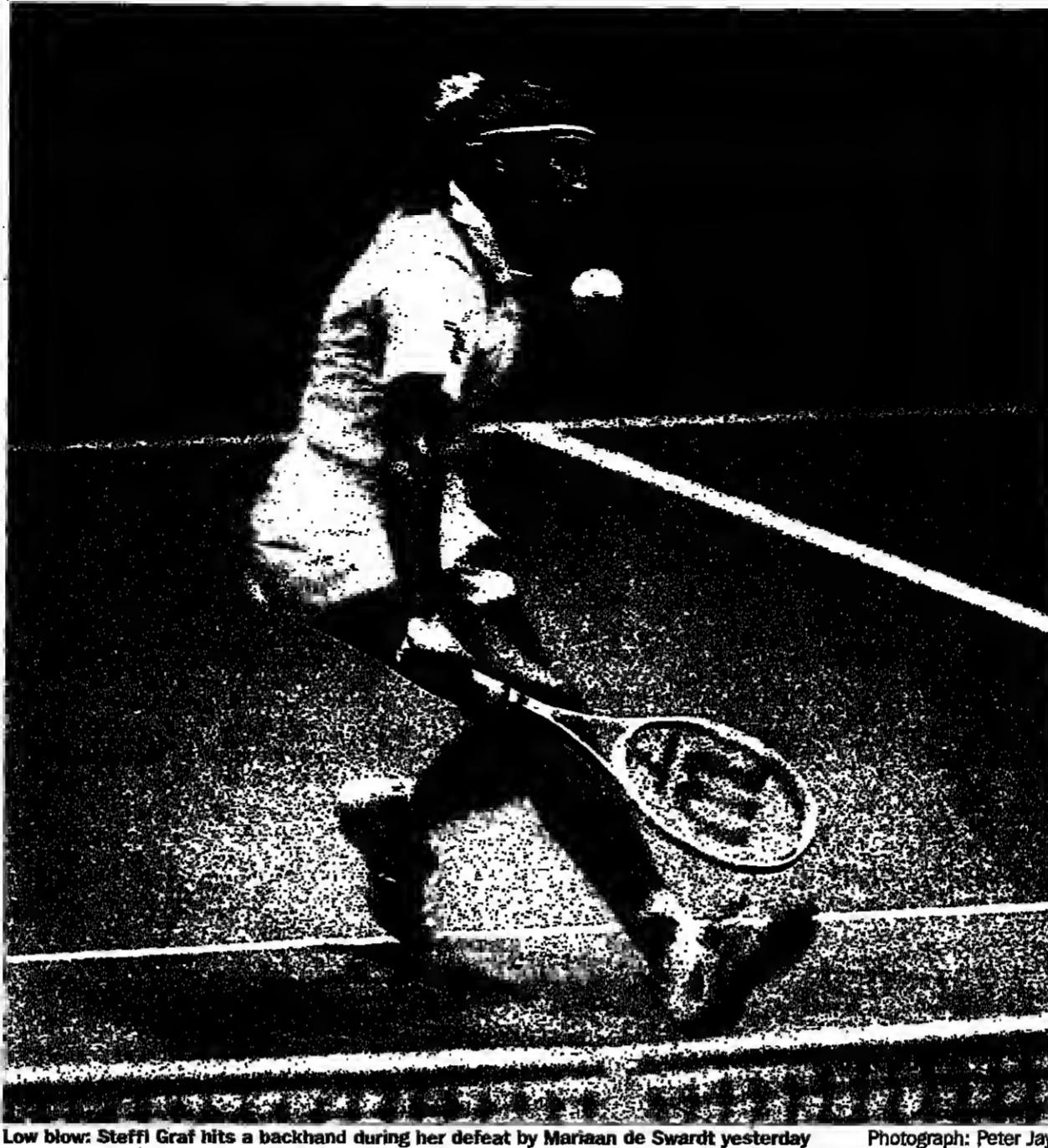
Norman, who spent September diving and fishing off his new boat, said that he only received appearance money in eight out of 24 tournaments and that he gives a \$1m to charity every year. "That is something else you don't know about," he said.

Norman has won only two major championships in his career - The Open at Turnberry and at Royal St George's - but as the man with the highest profile he generates more income than any other player. "I'm not going to tell you what I make a year," he said. "That's my business. I'm a very private person. I wouldn't ask you what you make a year. A humble hack replied £30,000." The shark swallowed hard. "You'd better find another job," he said.

The Alfred Dunhill Cup, also run by IMG, is contested by 16 teams of three, drawn into four groups, and played to a round-robin format. Today Australia, captained by Norman, play Argentina and are one of the favourites to win the Cup and £100,000 apiece. "I like playing for my country," Norman said. "I feel an obligation to play here." Another factor is that, in an undisclosed deal, he is being paid appearance money by the sponsors.

DUNHILL CUP (St Andrews) Tee-off times today: Group Three: New Zealand v Japan; Group 4: Canada v USA; Group 5: France v Fiji; Group 6: Scotland v Ireland; Group 7: Norway, Zimbabwe v Wales; 1000 T Johnstone v M Moulard; 1010 N Price v P Attfield; 1020 M McAleny v Scotland; Group Two: Scotland v Sweden; 1030 T Johnstone v M Moulard; 1040 S Tomlins v Ian West; 1050 C Montgomery v Chung Chuan-heng, South Africa v Venezuela; 1100 R Goosen v P Thabet; 1110 T Frost v D Goss; 1120 S Saito v Eriko; Group Four: Australia v Argentina; 1140 G Norman v J Coates; 1150 S Shergreen v E Roman; 1200 G Price v F Forster; England v France; 1230 S Watson v B Murray; 1240 R Stewart v J Sanderson; 1330 R Gordon v P Johnson.

After round-robin stage, semi-finals on Sunday evening will be held on 21 November; group 22 winners group 3 v winners group 4.



Low blow: Steffi Graf hits a backhand during her defeat by Mariana de Swardt yesterday

Photograph: Peter Jay

Royle aims to stop the rot in Europe

With Duncan Ferguson in prison and Andrei Kanchelski ineligible, just about the last thing Everton needed at the moment was to be without Daniel Amokachi. In keeping with a run of troubles, however, Joe Royle's dogs of war will be let off the collar in the European Cup Winners' Cup tonight without their, as he is known on Merseyside, Amo.

The Nigerian is required by his country which means, with Andy Hinchliffe squashed, the Everton squad which faces Feyenoord at Goodison tonight is cut to the bone. "We seem to turn one corner," Royle said, "and bang straight into something else."

Fortunately for Everton, their opponents are hardly brimming with confidence either, having sacked their coach, Willem Van Hanegem, recently after a run of bad results including a 4-0 defeat by Leeds' UEFA conquerors on Tuesday, PSV Eindhoven.

Guy Hodgson
previews a difficult night ahead for the British teams

They do have the free-kick scourge of Graham Taylor's England, Ronald Koeman, however, and also, intriguingly, the Nigerian Michael Obiki who was not called up by his country. Conspiracy theorists have already noted that the nationality of the Nigerian coach, Jo Bonfrere, is Dutch.

Feyenoord are a typical Dutch side," Royle said. "Very technical. They like to do things

in their own time and then break at you round the box with a change of pace. It won't be an easy game but if we're at our best it's one we can win."

Which pretty well sums up Celtic's position as they travel to meet Paris St Germain. Their problems revolve around the full-back Tosh McKinlay and the midfielder Simon Donnelly, who are doubtful with thigh and calf injuries respectively. Should McKinlay not play, Jamie McQuillen will step in.

The Celtic captain Paul McStay and the midfielder Phil O'Donnell have also entered the picture.

"Both players have now

come into my thinking," their manager, Tommy Burns, said last night at the team's hotel in Versailles. McStay has been nursing a groin strain, while O'Donnell has been struggling with a calf injury.

Burns knows that McStay's influence could be a vital factor in the intimidating atmosphere of Parc des Princes. Paris SG represent a formidable barrier, even though they will be without two key players. The defender and captain Alain Roche and the Panamanian striker Julio Cesar Delty Valdes are both injured, which leaves the midfielder Vincent Guerin to pose the biggest threat.

Indeed, Phelan could have been Goodison by now if Joe Royle's priorities had not been altered by the prison sentence handed to Duncan Ferguson last week. Royle, who is understood to have offered mid-fielder John Ebbrell as a straight swap for the Republic of Ireland full-back, has had to turn his attention further forward and Wimbledon's reaction yesterday suggested that his target was Holdsworth.

"We haven't turned Dean into one of the finest strikers in the country just to get the likes of Everton out of trouble," Sam Hammam, the club's owner, said. "If and when we choose to sell Dean it will only be for a new England transfer record and to a club of the calibre of Manchester United or a top club in Europe."

"I'm not exactly renowned for my defensive qualities and after clearing three on the line, you could say I was caught out of position three times."

The players Everton covet to halt a slide down the Premiership came into sharper focus yesterday when the club were linked with Manchester City's Terry Phelan and Wimbledon's Dean Holdsworth, writes Guy Hodgson.

Indeed, Phelan could have been Goodison by now if Joe Royle's priorities had not been altered by the prison sentence handed to Duncan Ferguson last week. Royle, who is understood to have offered mid-fielder John Ebbrell as a straight swap for the Republic of Ireland full-back, has had to turn his attention further forward and Wimbledon's reaction yesterday suggested that his target was Holdsworth.

"We haven't turned Dean into one of the finest strikers in the country just to get the likes of Everton out of trouble," Sam Hammam, the club's owner, said. "If and when we choose to sell Dean it will only be for a new England transfer record and to a club of the calibre of Manchester United or a top club in Europe."

Terry Sheringham, the Tottenham striker, has agreed a new contract which will keep him at White Hart Lane for the best four seasons.

Leeds lament exposure of defensive deficiencies

A man in The Peacock, the public house that faces Elland Road, went public with what was going through several minds on Tuesday night, writes Guy Hodgson. "I can't understand," he said sorrowfully, "why we've suddenly become so bad."

The immediate reason for this query was Leeds' 5-3 Uefa Cup defeat by PSV Eindhoven, but it had also been provoked by only one home win in six matches.

"We could have won 7-6," said Howard Wilkinson, the

deep-lying striker who was the game's outstanding player.

Both comrads need solving before the second leg in the Netherlands, where only the memory of Leeds' 3-0 away win over Monaco in the first round suggests they could be successful. "Of course I believe we can win," Wilkinson said. "It's almost an insult to my intelligence to ask me that question."

Ian Woan yesterday admitted he feared being sent off before he had the chance to become

Nottingham Forest's unlikely saviour in their Uefa Cup victory in France.

Woan - a winger - managed to frustrate Auxerre when he cleared off the line three times last night. But before he performed a double rescue act in the last five minutes of a hard-earned 1-0 first-leg win, he was shown a yellow card for a foul on striker Lilian Laslandes and then brought down midfielder Sabri Lamouchi just seconds later.

Woan recalled: "I saw the referee coming over to me and I thought: 'That's it - I'm going off.' But in the end he didn't even talk to me. I was very relieved, even though I considered the yellow card very harsh, as all that happened was that I collided with their striker and got tangled up with him."

"I'm not exactly renowned for my defensive qualities and after clearing three on the line, you could say I was caught out of position three times."

Both players have now come into my thinking," their manager, Tommy Burns, said last night at the team's hotel in Versailles. McStay has been nursing a groin strain, while O'Donnell has been struggling with a calf injury.

Burns knows that McStay's influence could be a vital factor in the intimidating atmosphere of Parc des Princes. Paris SG represent a formidable barrier, even though they will be without two key players. The defender and captain Alain Roche and the Panamanian striker Julio Cesar Delty Valdes are both injured, which leaves the midfielder Vincent Guerin to pose the biggest threat.

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Bowe looks for Lewis fight

Boxing

The planned fight is one part of a three-pronged effort by Bowe to help boxing in South Africa. Bowe's manager, Rock Newman, has invited the South African welterweight champion, Mpumlwana Makhobela, to appear on the undercard of Bowe's next fight, his third meeting with Evander Holyfield in Las Vegas on 4 November.

Newman has also invited several black promoters from East London and Johannesburg to begin the process of forming an alliance which will enable them to go to the United States, to work on a major promotion.

Baseball

MANCHESTER UNITED'S CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON, 4-2 and 6-0, continues with an away series, 4-2 and 6-0, against World Series leaders Atlanta Braves.

BOWE: "I'm innocent. I can't believe this is happening."

The secretary of the Amateur Athletic Association, Rohan Amerasinghe, said: "This is the first time one of our athletes has been accused of taking drugs. We feel she is innocent. She is not so foolish as to do something like that."

Amerasinghe added that his association would ask permission to send a representative to witness the test on a second sample taken from Jayasinghe.

Jayasinghe, who could be banned for four years if a second test also proves positive, said yesterday: "I am innocent. I can't believe this is happening."

The International Amateur Athletic Federation (Iaaaf) has issued a statement: "The Iaaaf has received information from the Sri Lankan Olympic Committee (Sloc) that the Sri Lankan athlete Susanthika Jayasinghe has tested positive for nandrolone, an anabolic steroid, in a urine sample taken on 10 July 1985. The Iaaaf has informed the Sri Lankan Olympic Committee that Jayasinghe has been suspended from competition until further notice. The Iaaaf has also informed the Sri Lankan Olympic Committee that Jayasinghe has been referred to the Iaaaf Disciplinary Commission for further action."

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SPORT

England's build-up to Test in chaos

Rugby Union

STEVE BALE

England's preparations for the Test against the World Cup holders, South Africa, at Twickenham on 18 November are in a state of chaos after squad training sessions which were notable for parades of walking wounded as for the work that was done.

The regular get-togethers at Marlow seemed a good idea at the time they were conceived last season in the long build-up to the World Cup. But now, though there is no evidence of malingering, they appear to be following the pattern of the old trial matches: good ones to miss.

This season's second session took place on Tuesday. "It was bad last time and it's worse this

time," Jack Rowell, the England manager, said. "I've said to the players that if, the week before we play South Africa, we are in this state, we'll have serious problems."

"We are not being able to prepare properly. They have great loyalty to their clubs and they play with niggly injuries which become chronic."

This week at Marlow the top sheet of Rowell's instruc-

tional flip-chart listed nine injured squad members in addition to Tony Underwood - Bracken, Catt, Johnson, Leonard, Mensah, Ojomoh, Pears, Shaw and West - and when Ian Hunter had not arrived by the start of training Rowell indicated he was now considering playing a centre, Damian Hopley, on the wing against the Springboks.

In other circumstances the

manager would have asked, or possibly demanded, that his players be excused the pre-Springbok round of Courage Championship fixtures on 11 November but instead he is reluctantly allowing them to play because the South African game was not on the original schedule.

This makes it no less frustrating when Rowell knows the

Springboks will have had a month since the end of their domestic season in which to rest and get ready. "You can imagine how supercharged South Africa are going to be," he said. "Last season we asked players to rest before internationals and it paid off. This time I said we wouldn't because this game came out of the blue, but in reality I'd love to."

Rowell temporarily added

Paul Grayson, Neil McCarthy,

Andy Mullins and John Fowler to make up for the injured shortfall but belatedly decided against adding Andy Robinson, this season's outstanding English open-side flanker, who thereby may well have been saved a wasted journey. "I told him we would leave it this week but when selection became imminent he would be very much at the forefront of our consideration," Rowell said.

■ Sean Fitzpatrick, the All Blacks captain, will miss the first game of the tour of Italy and France - against Italy B next Wednesday - after being suspended for eight days for throwing a punch in last Saturday's New Zealand Championship final between Auckland and Otago. Stuart Forster has replaced the injured scrum-half, Tuitor Fonu'u, in the tour party.



Cleveland's third baseman, Alvaro Espinoza (right) slides in to score the Indians' first run in their 4-0 victory over the Seattle Mariners which took them through to baseball's World Series, where they will meet the Atlanta Braves

Rupert Cornwell, page 30

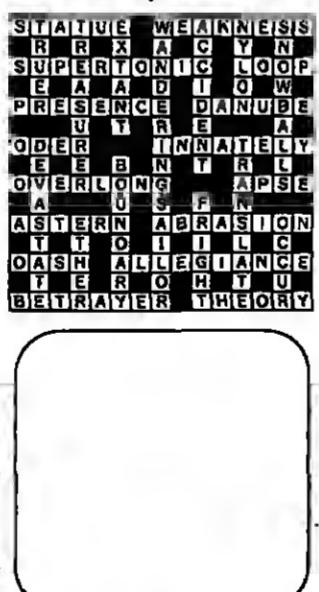
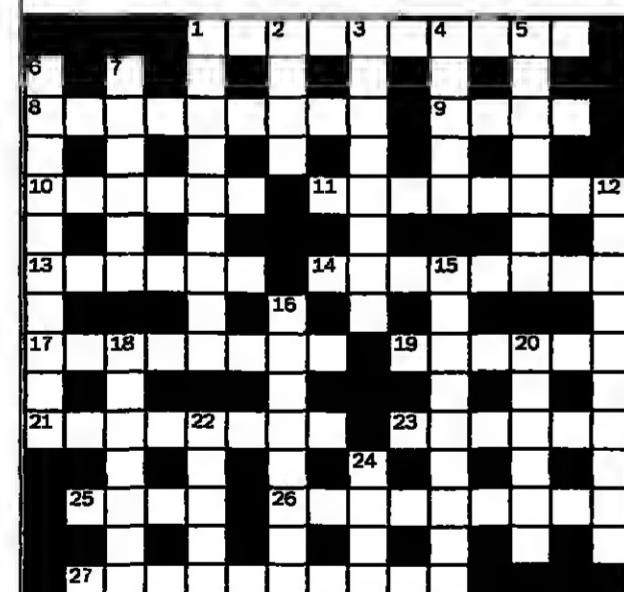
Photograph: Reuter

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 284. Thursday 19 October

By Spurios

Wednesday's solution



- 1. Proof, but not in relation to spirit? (10)
- 2. Fellow is entertaining reference with story involving brilliant wingers (9)
- 3. Time to copy video, perhaps? (4)
- 4. Tool for those working at a trade? (6)
- 5. Hence a certain sort of mist can produce a plant disease (8)
- 6. Have one's ups and downs in the first set? (6)
- 7. State of readiness indicated by dealer about to import article from Bordeaux (3,5)
- 8. Menacing explosive device netted by Merchant Navy - it's outside (8)
- 9. Card-playing group in train (6)

- 21. Painful disorder restricting a Dutch sailor, no stay-at-home by nature (8)
- 23. Girl won't take part in disputes about arrangements (3-3)
- 25. Contend women should give an opinion (4)
- 26. Agribusiness with branch taking Friday off, initially (5-4)
- 27. Extend area covered by new gas reading scheme (10)

- 1. Like the majority of the Government? (5-4)
- 2. Holiday in the fall (4)
- 3. Withdrawn and kept on one side? (8)
- 4. Jazz number you can get up in a fortnight (5)

Atherton feeling positive

Cricket

Mike Atherton led England's team off to South Africa last night, delighted with the way his management relationship with Ray Illingworth is going - and not a bit perturbed by Ill's insistence on being totally in charge.

England's battle-hardened captain, his batteries recharged after a month's rest, spoke of how much he was looking forward to the historic 14-week tour, England's first to South Africa for 30 years.

And, before boarding the flight to Johannesburg from Heathrow, Atherton said: "Raymond has been given a particular job by the Test and County Cricket Board and he wants to have the last say. I'm happy for it to be that way, but I don't think he's going to ignore whatever I have to say."

"I've had a lot of input dur-

ing the summer and I think we have both learnt things. In fact, as far as selection of the team is concerned, I don't think there will be any real change compared to previous tours, even though Ray will make my final decisions."

"Our relationship has progressed to a level where we get on extremely well - but the most important thing is how it works within the England team. I felt during the summer that the players were very happy with the way things were going and it makes a lot of sense for Ray to be with the team this winter as manager for 100 per cent of the time."

"There will be no lack of communication, nor will there be anything misconstrued - as possibly happened last winter. I like to have someone around to talk to, both during and between matches - it will be nice to have Ray around for the whole tour."

Atherton said he felt the five-Test series will be very sim-

ilar in style to this summer's contest with the West Indies. He said: "It will be dominated by pace, but we have the batsmen who can handle that. We have a lot of really good players of quick bowling, as we showed against the West Indies, so we will have no fears on that score."

"My real hope is that we get more luck than in previous years with injuries, and that especially our three quickest bowlers - Devon Malcolm, Dominic Cork and Darren Gough - stay fit."

"I hope the South Africans remember Devon from when he took nine wickets against them at The Oval - and it's up to Devon to reproduce that form."

"All our players are confident that we can beat South Africa, but we must keep playing the sort of cricket that we produced this summer. In the past our away form has been poor. We've got to change that."

Kumble milestone, page 31

O'Sullivan's misery continues

Snooker

Ronnie O'Sullivan suffered a first-round defeat for the second world-ranking event in succession at the Skoda Grand Prix in Sunderland yesterday. The former UK champion, who also failed to clear the opening hurdle in the recent Thailand Classic, crashed out 5-2 to Portadown's Michael Duffy in the biggest upset of the season so far.

"It's a big disappointment be-

cause I have been working re-

ally hard on my game and practising more than I have in a very long time," said the world No 3 from Essex, whose well-documented family problems appear to be having an adverse effect on him.

O'Sullivan, taking on some

risky pots which Duffy described as "mad", fell 2-1 behind and also trailed 3-0 in the fourth frame before briefly coming to life. The 19-year-old constructed a superb 102 clearance to draw level at 2-2 and it looked like he had weathered the storm.

But Duffy, whose only other significant achievement in three years as a professional was to record a victory over Alex Higgins, regained the lead by winning the scrappy fifth frame on the blue. After that, Duffy pulled away with breaks of 35 and 43.

"Ronnie played well in patches, but he didn't seem to be concentrating 100 per cent, and you could tell he wasn't totally with it," Duffy said.

Duffy goes forward to meet fellow Ulsterman Joe Swail,

who maintained his solid start

to the season by beating Scunthorpe's Jeff Cundy 5-3.

For the second day in a row, a player from Grimsby left the table visibly upset with his opponent. On Tuesday, Mike Hallatt was annoyed about a free-ball decision during the deciding frame of his 5-4 defeat by Neal Foulds. Yesterday, it was Dean Reynolds who expressed disgust at the slow play of Mark Flowerdew, who finally beat him 5-3 after a 4hr 21min marathon.

"It was ridiculous," Reynolds

said. "Referees should do something about the speed of play and intervene. Throughout my career I have never come across a slower player than him. It was a joke and it didn't do the game any favours."

Results, Sporting Digest,

page 31

Domi suspended for unprovoked attack

Ice hockey

"Mr Domi's actions were deliberate, premeditated and clearly administered with the intent to injure his opponent," said Brian Burke, the NHL director of hockey operations.

"The fact that Mr Samuelsson was unable to defend himself as he was looking away from his opponent also was a factor in my decision. While Mr Samuelsson verbally challenged Mr Domi prior to the punch, verbal taunting by an opponent does not justify this type of conduct."

Domi is eligible to return on 3 November for the Leafs' game against Vancouver. Samuelsson, who was diagnosed as suffering from concussion, did not play in the Rangers' 7-5 defeat by Hartford on Monday night.

Results, Sporting Digest, page 31

THERE'S NEVER ANY TROUBLE BREWING IN OUR FAMILY

BOMBARDIER
PREMIUM BITTER
BREWED BY THE CHARLES WELLS FAMILY BREWERY, BEDFORDSHIRE, EST. 1872